

STAND UP AND FIGHT *by* **WILLIAM E. BARRETT**

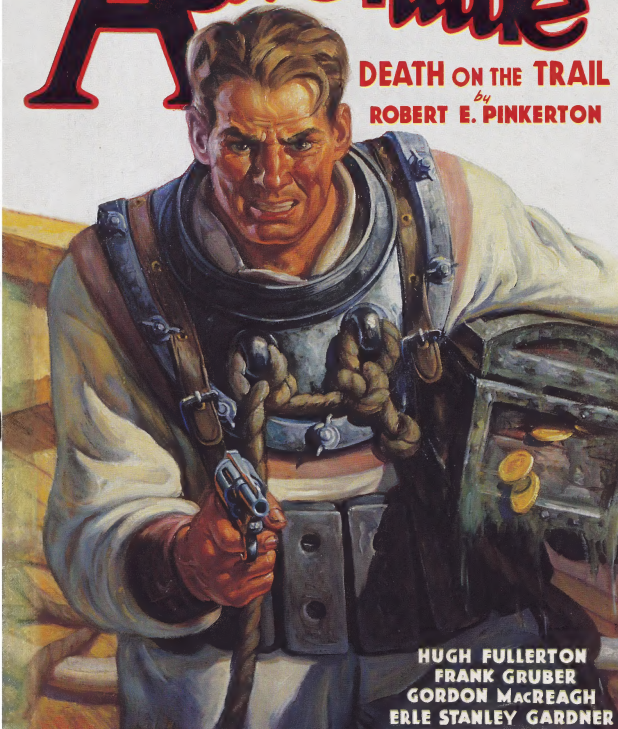
15¢

MARCH



Adventure

DEATH ON THE TRAIL
by
ROBERT E. PINKERTON



**HUGH FULLERTON
FRANK GRUBER
GORDON MACREAGH
ERLE STANLEY GARDNER**

MARCH
ADVENTURE



15 Cents

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Thousands of people are disabled every hour of the day. Don't let sickness or accident find you unprepared. Get a "Security" policy. The cost is so low that you cannot afford to be without this protection.

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Please send me complete information at once and tell me how I may get the "Security" Policy for 10 Day Free Inspection without obligation. No agent will call. I am to be the sole judge.

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Street or R.F.D.
City..... State.....

IF MOTOR WASTES OIL SEND FOR *Free* SAMPLE!



Directions for testing this amazing mineral will be included—Just give make of car on coupon below.

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Nearly a million motorists have tested this amazing mineral which expands up to 30 times when heated. *Let us prove it to you at no risk.*

If worn rings and cylinders are wasting oil and gas, wonders can happen to your motor. Wonders of cutting oil and gas waste—(savings up to 50% reported)—of new power, pep and quiet without the expense of new rings and rebore. Ovrhaul can be the secret of big savings to you.

USED IN PLACE OF NEW RINGS AND REBORE!

Ovrhaul has been thoroughly tested and proved in leading industrial laboratories—the mechanical engineering departments of a State University—and an outstanding School of Technology as well as nearly a million motorists.

INSTALLED IN 30 MINUTES!

Ovrhaul is quickly installed through spark plug openings—no special tools—no car tie-up. Works in while you drive and is as harmless to use as oil. Single application lasts up to 10,000 miles.

SAMPLE FREE!

If your car is wasting oil and gas, before you spend up to \$150.00 for new rings and rebore—send your name and address on the coupon below for a free sample of this amazing mineral which expands up to 30 times when heated, and full details of a real money-making opportunity. Air mail reaches us overnight from the East.

Free SAMPLE COUPON

B. L. Mellinger, Pres. (Paste on Postcard and mail)
Ovrhaul Co., A-910, Los Angeles, Calif.

Without cost or obligation, rush me FREE SAMPLE.
ALSO show me your big money-making plan.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

Name and Year of Car.....

Money-Making Territories Open

FOR SALESMEN AND DISTRIBUTORS WHO ACT QUICK!

If you want to get into an exclusive, quick-acting, money business, of your own, send the coupon below. Ovrhaul appeals to wide-awake men with vision. Nationally advertised—Tremendous market. Big profits. A fast seller and repeater. Fully protected by U. S. and Foreign patents. If you want money, either spare or full time—Investigate! **SEND TODAY!** Let us send you demonstration sample. Let us show you how you can start in this business, NOW—before all territories are assigned.

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SANDER'S GARAGE

D. B. Sanders, Mgr.
General Repair and Auto Supplies
Lima, Ohio

Enclosed please find my order for 72 tubes of Ovrhaul. It will be necessary that you rush the shipment immediately because it has to sell as fast as we can get it.

The results that we have had from the use of Ovrhaul are very satisfactory. It is extremely beneficial to an automobile motor. I have no hesitancy in saying that it is harmless to the operation of any working parts.

Gentlemen: Atlanta, Ga.
I have put between seventy-five and one hundred tubes of Ovrhaul in old cars and I have not yet had a complaint. I have been a mechanic for many years and Ovrhaul is the product I have ever recommended to car owners for the reduction of decreasing oil and gas waste caused by worn cylinders and rings.

Every time I use Ovrhaul in a motor, the compression is greatly increased, the pep and power is helped, the motor is made smoother, and the gas and oil used is considerably reduced.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) J. L. (Jack) Reeves.

CLIP AND MAIL COUPON TODAY!
B. L. MELLINGER, Pres. Ovrhaul Co., A-910, Los Angeles, Calif.



Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)



Vol. 100, No. 5

for
March, 1939

Published Once a Month

- Death on the Trail (a novelette)** **ROBERT E. PINKERTON** 11
The food gave out, the dogs went lame, and three grim foes fought the North for every foot of a storm-lashed trail that beckoned back to life—if they were men enough to make it.
- Stand Up and Fight (a novelette)** **WILLIAM E. BARRETT** 35
Outside, a mighty arena screamed for the blood of a champion who had lost his crown—and inside his dressing-room beaten JoeMcMillen fought a still greater battle—against a murder charge.
- Peace Marshal (2nd part of 4)** **FRANK GRUBER** 58
Six-gun law comes to Broken Lance, and John Bonniwell watches the battle signs on the Chisholm trail and waits for Texas vengeance.
- God and Lemuel Sizemore** **HUGH FULLERTON** 74
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- The South Pole Race (a fact story)** **TED LEITZELL** 81
The race where death went to the loser and a world’s tribute to all—Scott’s dash to the South Pole.
- The Joss of Tai Wong** **ERLE STANLEY GARDNER** 94
Ageless in her wisdom, subtle in her vengeance—China has her own code of dealing with those who mock at her gods.
- Badlands Trail** **GORDON MacCREAGH** 102
Old Hoke Ballew wasn’t any great shakes at figures, but a man who had ridden with Wild Bill could figure out a way to balance a crooked ledger. Grimly he slid a shell into his rifle.
- Teeth of Terror** **ANTHONY RUD** 108
The twenty-foot demon of the sacred Ganges had returned to exact his tribute—Gaur the iron-clad, whom man nor beast could awe.
- The Death Ship (a fact story)** **TOM BISSELL** 6
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Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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IF I FAILED...WE WERE ALL DEAD MEN



LASHED TO SHROUDS
OF SINKING,
BURNING SCHOONER,
SAILORS SEE HOPE
OF RESCUE FADE

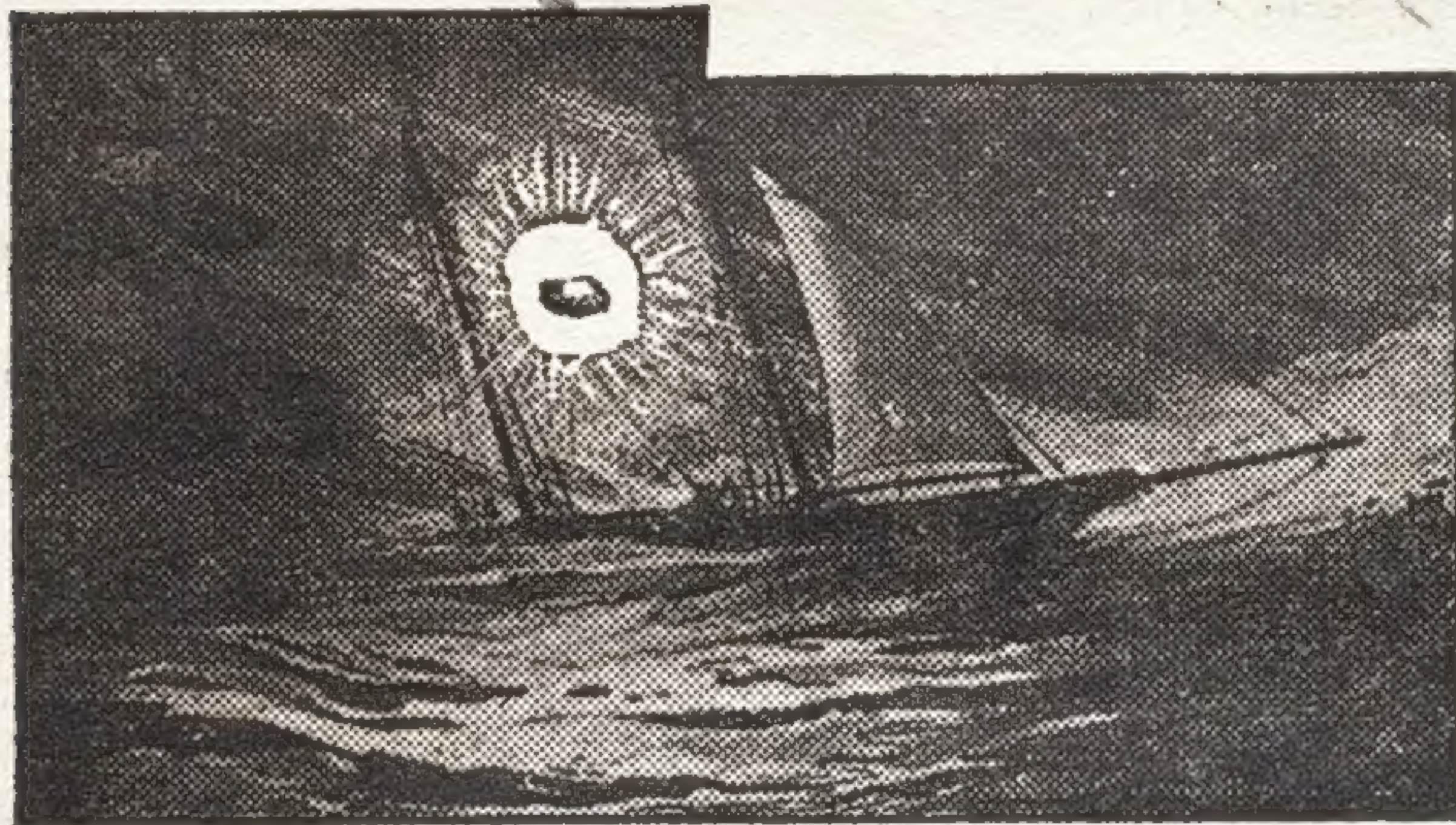
① "The dream of my life, for which I had saved since I first went to sea at twelve, had come true!" writes Capt. Hans Milton of 610 West 111th St., New York City. "I was making my first voyage as master and owner of my own vessel, the two-masted topsail schooner 'Pioneer,' when the hurricane of last September caught us 400 miles off Nantucket.



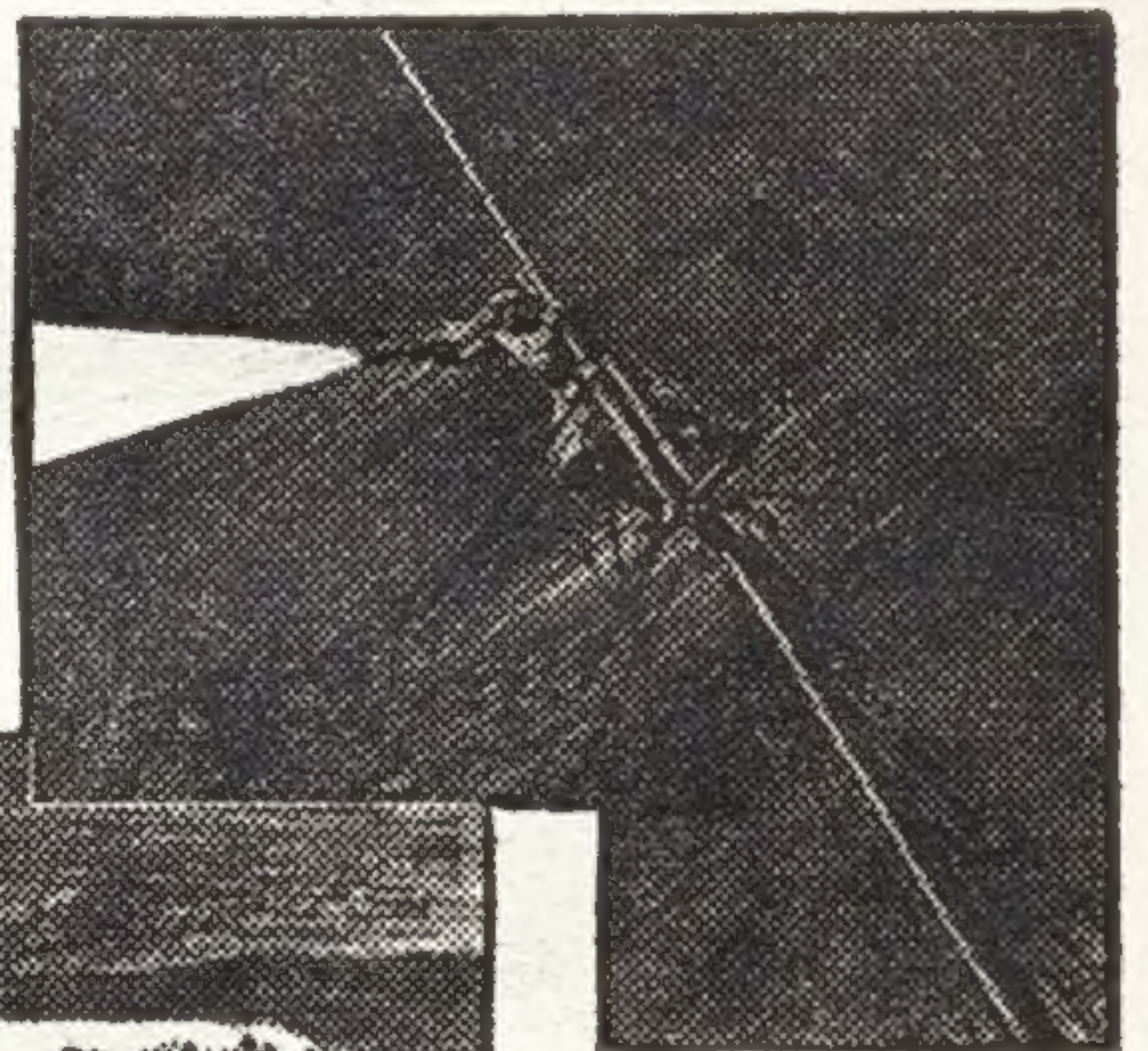
② "We were pumping to keep afloat when we passed into the windless vortex of the storm where the waves were leaping and jumping crazily and where they crashed in our companion ways and filled the ship beyond hope of saving her.

The five of us and the cat scrambled aloft for our lives. Our deck-load of lumber kept us afloat and without fresh water and with almost no food we lived, lashed to the rigging, for three endless days and nights.

③ "Once a steamer hove in sight—but failing to see our distress signals, went her way. At 3 a.m. on the fourth morning steamer lights showed momentarily over the wild sea. We rigged a huge ball of sails and blankets, soaked it with gasoline, touched it off and hoisted it aloft.



④ "But the steamer did not change her course. She thought we were fishing. The wind blew burning fragments back on the ship setting her afire in various places. I could see the stern light of the steamer going away from us. *If I couldn't stop her, we were all dead men!* I climbed to the fore-top and in desperation pulled my flashlight from my back pocket and in Morse code signalled 'Sinking... SOS... Help!'

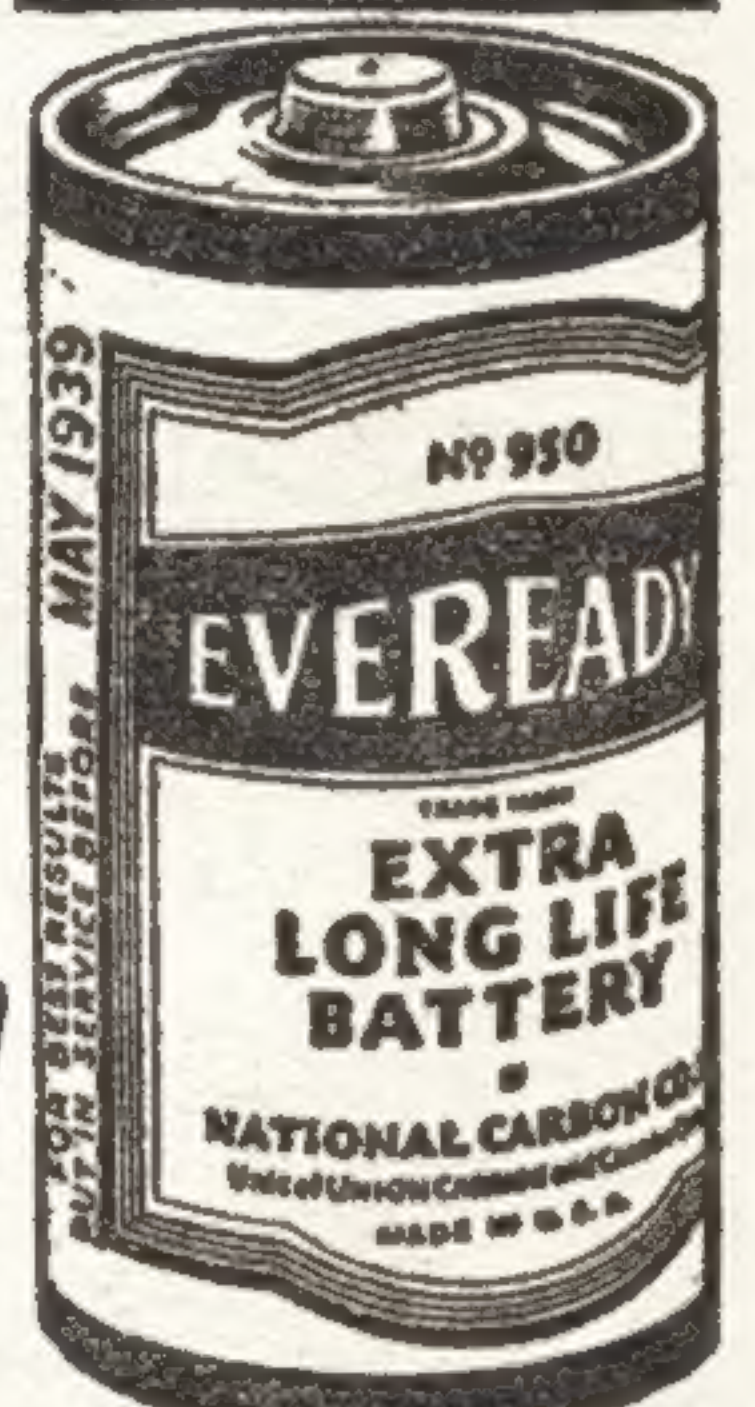


⑤ "Slowly, I saw the ship turn! In her last hour afloat, all of us and the cat were saved from the sinking, burning 'Pioneer' by those fine seamen of the United States Liner 'American Banker' and by the power of two tiny 'Eveready' fresh DATED batteries that stood by us in the blackest hour of our lives!

(Signed)

Captain Hans Milton

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—nor that of hun-
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who have added inches to
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thighs and calves. Prove for your-
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can actually become a husky, healthy,
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prove that you can get a big balanced
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easy way.

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New York, N. Y.

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me—give me a healthy, husky body, and big muscle development.
Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength"
and full details of your 7-DAY trial offer.

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(Please print or write plainly)

Address.....

City..... State.....

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bearing initials AT would like to contact
other 270 degrees. Address E. Stanton Brown,
4881 Woodland Avenue, Western Springs,
Illinois, U. S. A.

Chester E. Baumgardner, 1020 E. Olive St.,
Bloomington, Ill., is anxious to get in touch
with any former members of Co. "E," 51st
Infantry during the World War.

Otterson. Word wanted of any of my
mother's relatives who went to America from
Ireland. John M. O'Callaghan, P.O. Box 50,
Mossman, Queensland, Australia.

The following were all yeomen in Flag
Office of Vice Admiral of the Pacific Fleet
from 1919-1922:—Emery Dobson, "Spick"
LaChance, Carl Dudding, Tom Girty, Roger
Sherman, John Frew, Frank Bertin. Word
wanted by former shipmate, Horald P. Gil-
mour, 22 Worcester Street, Boston, Mass.

Floyd Maby, last heard from in Seattle,
Wash., about 1933. Home originally at Ply-
mouth, Pennsylvania. Word appreciated by
his mother, Mrs. Ida Maby, 191 N. Division
St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Herbert Roig, 37, originally from Texas,
last heard of in 1928 living at Marquette
Apts., 965 Geary St., San Francisco, Calif.
Was working for the San Francisco *Examiner*
circulation department in 1928. Please write
Stanley Jones, 1146 Webster St., San Fran-
cisco, Calif.

Dudleigh R. Wickham, 61 Holmes Court,
Albany, New York, wants word of "Clifford
Ogden" or "Clifford Cochrane," formerly of
Oakland, Calif., undertaker, who served with
him in the 63rd Infantry, also helped build
the railroad from Seward to Fairbanks,
Alaska. Also Bob Baker of San Francisco,
who left Seward with him on the *Alameda*,
who still has the Indian pestle Wickham
found when they were shipwrecked near
Vancouver, B. C. Understands Baker shipped
to China.

Word wanted of Russell Stanley, formerly
of 838 Jannette Street, Parkersburg, West
Virginia. Was in Co. F, 20th Infantry, from
January, 1930, to January, 1933. Communi-
cate with Sgt. David H. Wagner, Hq. Com-
pany, 27th Infantry, Schofield Barracks, T. H.

Word wanted of Burton Funnell, who
lived in Norwich, N. Y., and is racetrack en-
thusiast. Please communicate with Philip
Schlit, 164 Durston Ave., Syracuse, New
York.



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GIVEN AWAY**

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stands about 14"
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I will award it
to my pupil who
makes the most
improvement in
his development
within the next
three months.

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Typewriter GIVEN

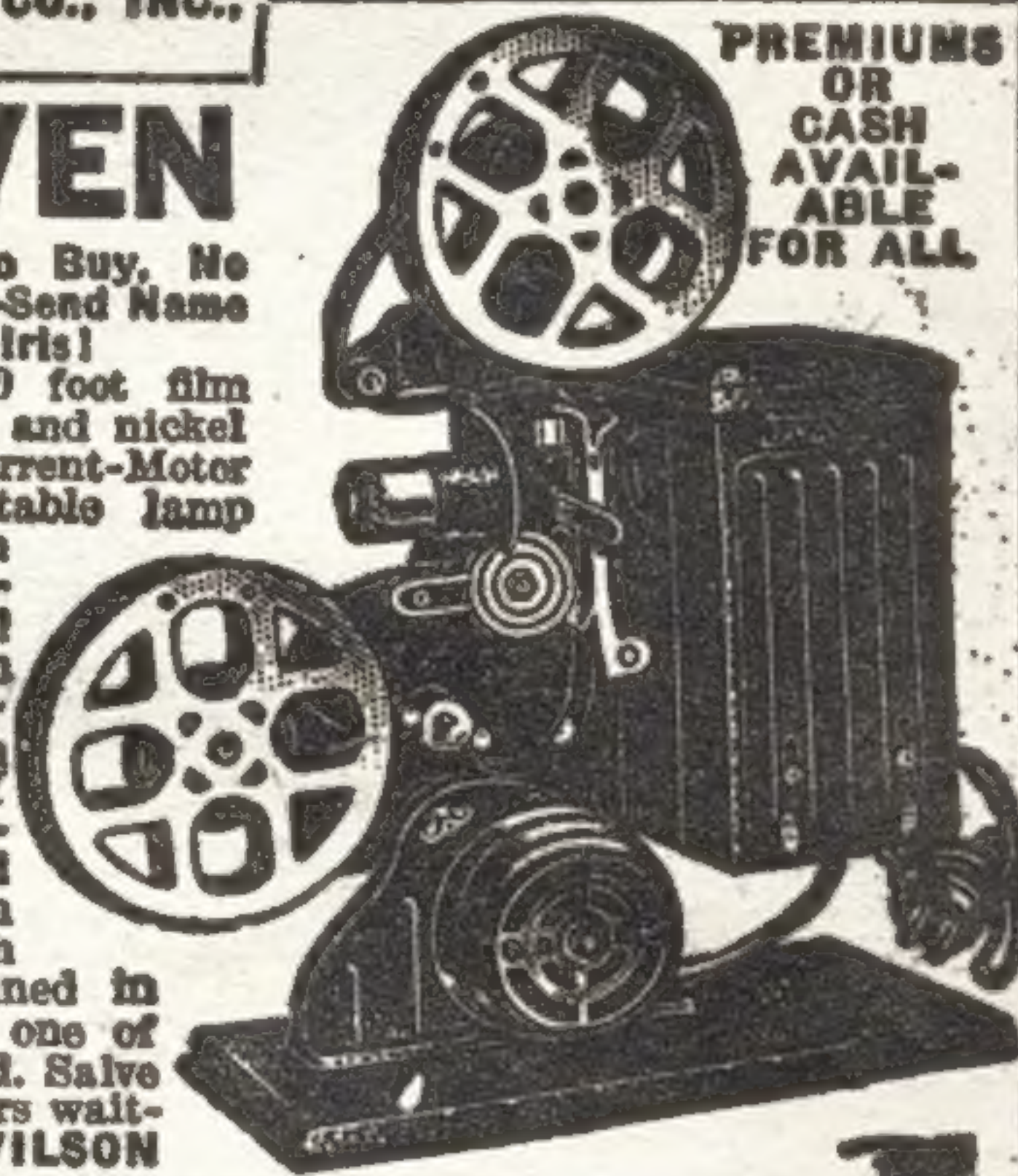
Or Big Cash Commission—Send No Money—Send Name and Address. Nothing to Buy!

Every letter in the alphabet and the numerals from 1 to 10. Any child can write on it after two hours practice and older people will grasp the idea at once. Full directions, extra supply of best quality copying ink. **Clever! Practical! Given** for simply giving away free beautifully colored art pictures with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** used for chaps, burns, etc., which you easily sell to your friends and relatives at 25c a box (with picture free) and paying as explained in catalog. **Be first.** Customers waiting. Write quick. **Mail coupon now. WILSON CHEMICAL CO., INC., DEPT. PP-91, TYRONE, PA.**

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**PREMIUMS
OR
CASH
AVAIL-
ABLE
FOR ALL**



GIVEN

GIRLS

BOYS

BOTH GIVEN

GIVEN! Send No Money!



Or Big Cash Commission—Nothing to Buy—No Risk—Send No Money—Send Name—Mail Coupon—BOYS! 22 Cal. Bolt. Action self-cocking Safety Iver Johnson RIFLE, 22 inches long. LADIES! GIRLS! Beautiful, sturdy, American made WRIST WATCH of neat size — EITHER Rifle or Watch YOURS for **SIMPLY GIVING AWAY FREE** big colored pictures with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** used for CHAPS, BURNS, SORES, etc., which you easily sell to friends at 25c a box (with picture FREE) remit as per premium catalog. **Wilson Chem. Co., Inc., Dept. PP-91, Tyrone, Pa.**



GUITAR GIVEN

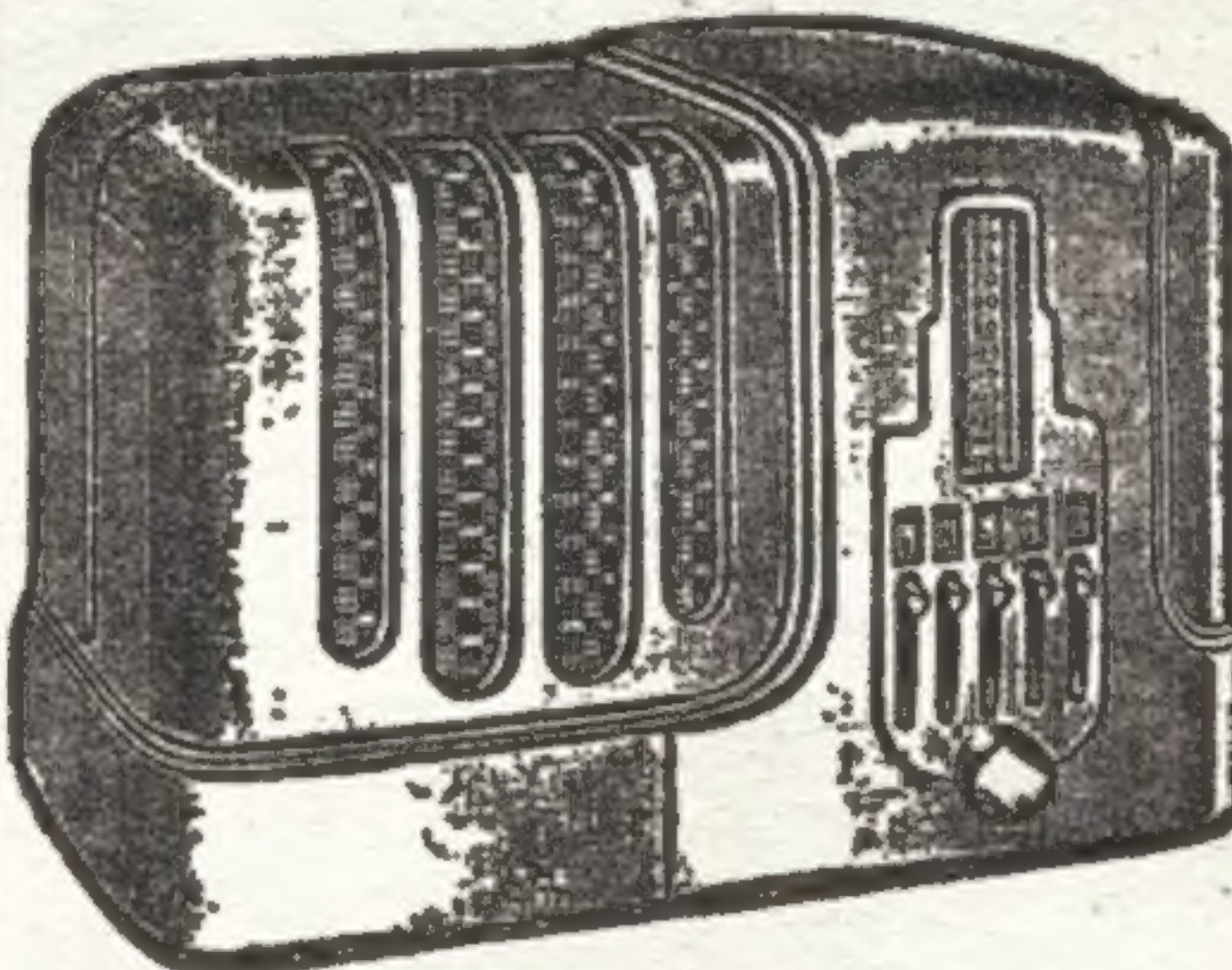
**Or Big Cash Commission
Send No Money
Boys! Girls!**

Standard size regulation guitar. Regulated—fretted ebony-finger-board—pearl position dots. A **MARVEL.** Yours for **SIMPLY GIVING AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures (correct size for framing) with our **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** used for burns, cuts, chaps, sores, etc., which you easily sell to friends and neighbors at 25c a box (giving picture Free) and remitting as explained in premium catalog. **SPECIAL —** Or choose one of 20 premiums for returning only \$3.00 collected. (44th yr.) **Be first. Send today —We trust you. Mail coupon.**

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CHEM.
CO., INC.
Dept.
PP-91
TYRONE,
PENNSYLVANIA**



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To
Buy**



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MAIL COUPON NOW

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Name

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The Death Ship

a fact story

By TOM BISSELL



RECENTLY, attention has been given to three Japanese soldiers, who, during the invasion of China, took a five hundred pound airplane bomb in their arms and crashed its explosive head against the gates of the stubbornly resisting walled town they were attacking. The human bomb provided an entrance for the rest of the force and blew the three soldiers into eternity.

Newspaper comments at the time lay stress on the Japanese belief that the highest human achievement is death for the sake of one's country, and that through the centuries of Japanese growth there have developed classes called the shizoku and samurai, who have trained themselves to seize any opportunity of sacrifice for their country.

The United States has never developed any special Hero class, yet, in 1804, when our country had existed independently only twenty-eight years, there were thirteen men who sacrificed themselves gallantly in the service of their young country.

In 1804, this nation was engaged in war with the Barbary pirates of Africa's Mediterranean coast. The raiders were Mohammedans, and religious differences as well as commercial gain caused them to maintain a large fleet of swift corsairs to prey upon commerce.

The English paid a tribute, which they hoped would give them entire control of Mediterranean trade, then the richest in the world. There were many



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willing markets for American goods, but our trade was becoming paralyzed by the audacity of the roving raiders who were able to seize the slow-moving merchantmen. Many crews were taken and held for ransom or sold into slavery.

Agreement promising payment of tribute were accepted by the pirates, but the system of double cross was even then known, and no sooner did they get money than they demanded more and still continued their raids.

We sent over a small naval force which was brilliantly successful in many actions, but the fleet was too small to patrol the entire scene of action. The only alternative was to bravely take the fight to the pirates' headquarters. The squadron blockaded the fortified harbor of Tripoli and managed to prevent most of the raiders getting to sea. But they were unable to come to real close range and shell the town, since the Turks had many heavily armed gunboats at the entrance of the harbor.

Master Commandant Richard Somers, who was only twenty-five years old, volunteered to take a small vessel into the harbor and blow her up in the midst of the gunboats.

The seventy ton ketch *Intrepid* was chosen and prepared as a floating mine by filling her hold with one hundred barrels of powder, one hundred and fifty large explosive shells and several tons of scrap iron.

Two of the fastest rowing life boats in the squadron were placed aboard her to permit the crew's leaving after the fuse started burning. However when Somers had been discussing the proper timing for the fuse with the squadron commander, Captain Preble, he remarked, "Do not worry. If the fuse is doubtful we will fire her very well without one." To others he indicated that all of the volunteer crew had agreed never to be taken alive or allow such a large amount of ammunition to fall into enemy hands.

The night of September 4, 1804, was slightly foggy, yet a light breeze served to carry the little ship into the closely guarded harbor. At nine fifty-five the forts on shore began a heavy cannonade, showing that the intruders' presence was known.

Watchers aboard the American vessels could see nothing, yet every soul was awake with anxious thoughts of the thirteen alone against the thousands.

At ten o'clock Lieutenant Carrol aboard the U. S. *Siren* saw a dim light, like a waving torch moving in a waving line as if someone were running along the deck of a vessel. The light paused for a moment, as if the bearer had descended into a hatchway. A moment later a volcanic eruption of flame leaped high to the heavens followed by a roaring explosion. The shore batteries ceased firing; there was utter darkness and silence.

Aboard the fleet, lights were kept reflected in the water to guide the returning crew. The ships tacked back and forth, at intervals firing rockets and hailing one another, but the search was of no avail.

At dawn, wreckage of the *Intrepid* was seen floating at the entrance of the harbor. One of the largest of the pirate craft was missing and two others, completely shattered, were aground close to shore.

After the war with the Turks was concluded, authentic reports of the venture were gained. The *Intrepid* had been attacked by three pirate ships. Master Commandant Somers had seized an open ship's lantern and deliberately stepped with it into the powder-filled hold, destroying his own crew and most of the attackers.

Eight bodies were eventually found, but none of the American crew returned alive. Thus perished thirteen of the navy's finest men, ranking from Master Commandant Richard Somers, and Midshipmen Henry Wadsworth and Joseph Israel, to the seamen, James Simms, Thomas Tompline, James Harris, William Keith, William Harrison, Robert Clark, Hugh McCormick, Jacob Williams, Peter Penner, and Isaac Downes.

Their exploit made the Turks realize that the Americans, though lacking any religious fanaticism, had the quality of patriotism which would carry them to the greatest human sacrifice. It materially hastened the end of the war which gained complete freedom for American shipping in the Mediterranean.

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Dave was alone in breaking trail in deep snow.



DEATH ON THE TRAIL

A novelette

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON

SOGGY muskeg and thick spruce swamp, a low sky and rain that carried flakes of snow—the going was tough for starving men. Dave Marsh took it the best he could, concentrating on a fine balance between speed of travel and conservation of what little energy remained.

"We'll make it," Dave said when Fred

Sedley called for a rest late in the day.

Dave spoke cheerfully. His long body sagged against a tree, but Fred stumbled to a windfall and sat down, the rifle across his knee.

"May be," Fred said, and his tone was between a snarl and a whine.

Dave stared. Fred was thirty-five, ten years older. He was stronger, had

always been good natured and competent.

"You were too damned bull-headed," Fred said. "We should've gone back to the H.B.C. post. Caribou that way. Indians."

Dave Marsh started on. Fred was getting nasty. Dave, near physical exhaustion, found his own mind playing tricks. It worked in ruts and he couldn't get it out. It clung to this change in Fred and to the half cooked rabbit Dave carried in the down robe on his back.

"What right you got to say we won't eat it?" Fred snarled behind him.

"When we can't walk any more, it will give us a few miles," Dave said without turning.

"I'm so weak now I can't see," Fred said.

They were following a game trail worn two feet deep in thick moss. But it carried no fresh tracks. Snowshoe rabbits did not jump up ahead of them. It was the seventh year and the varying hares, commonly so plentiful, had disappeared.

"We'll eat the rabbit tomorrow," Dave said.

Dave felt that his mind was like a bee buzzing about his head. He could not stop its senseless spinning. Always he kept thinking that Boiling Sand River must be just ahead.

"Wait," Fred Sedley called.

Suddenly Dave's mind was clear. He was thinking swiftly even before he turned to see the rifle aimed at him.

"Give me that rabbit," Fred said.

"If we wait and eat it—" Dave began.

"I'm doing the eating!"

Fred's purpose was plain in the eye that squinted along the rifle barrel.

"I've lugged this rabbit for days and it weighs fifty pounds now," Dave said.

"That gives me a right to—"

"I'm eating it," Fred said. "I can live twice as long. And I'm going to live."

Dave Marsh looked away from the eye behind the rear sight. If he escaped a bullet he lacked the strength to battle a heavier foe.

Slowly he loosened the pack from his back. It was a down robe that had floated from the wrecked canoe. The rabbit was inside.

The machine in Dave's head took charge of an exhausted body. He whirled, hands gripping the straps, and let the pack fly. With its release he was after it.

The robe struck the rifle. Dave heard a muffled report and he crashed against Fred. His mind began spinning again. He could only wonder where he got the strength to batter and tear at the body that reeled back and finally went down beneath him.

Ruthlessness had not prepared Fred Sedley for this and his muscles were not spurred by desperation and rage. Dave struck at the face that showed white beneath a stubble of black beard until blood spread across the white. He rolled clear, to lie gasping.

Dave saw the flecks of down then, sprinkling the moss, and knew the bullet had ripped the robe, perhaps had been stopped. He got to his knees and crawled to the rifle.

Sweat glistened on his forehead and he shivered from the cold. Dave pumped a fresh shell into the barrel, and he did not let the hammer down.

Fred sat up and felt of his face, stared at the blood on his fingers. Nothing about him was formidable now.

"You carry the pack," Dave said. "Ahead. Get started."



DARKNESS halted them in a thick spruce swamp. No distant murmur of rapids came to cheer their spirits. Even if Dave were right and Boiling Sand River lay ahead, he felt there was slim chance now that they would have the strength to reach it.

They built a fire. Dave hung the rabbit on a tree.

"When we get to crawling, we'll eat," Dave said.

He sat beneath the rabbit, the rifle across his knees. Fred did not speak. Dave watched him in wonder, for he had liked and admired Fred Sedley in their months together.

"Take the robe," Dave said. "I'll sit up."

Fred lay on the other side of the fire. Dave leaned against the tree. When drowsiness threatened he took the cart-

ridges from the rifle and placed them in a pocket.

It was dawn when they awakened. They went on at once, Fred staggering under the robe with the rabbit wrapped inside it. After two hours they reached Boiling Sand River.

Strength flooded their bodies and their minds became free of fog and blurred images. Dave gathered wood.

"You were right," Fred said. "The river. Everything."

Dave did not comment. He was amazed by the change that had come over the man. Fred caught the glance.

"That business yesterday," Fred said. "I was crazy, Dave. Didn't know what I was doing."

"I'd have killed you if I'd been strong enough," Dave said, and he began to cut the rabbit down the center.

"Sure," Fred said. "Don't blame you for feeling that way. But it's all over now. Like a nightmare."

A grin lighted Fred's haggard face. He had not washed the blood from a cut cheek and one eye was puffed and blue.

"We're no more than a mile below the falls portage," Fred said. "That's only two miles from camp."

Fred was good-natured and confident. It was as if the past eight days had been wiped from his mind. But he would walk into camp with a cut face and a black eye and Alec De Witt, Fred's partner, would see the evidence of battle.

Alec must learn something else, Dave knew. The supplies for which they had gone, food necessary for the long journey out to the railroad, had been lost. All three might face starvation again and now Dave did not like the idea of such a test with a man like Fred.

"We'll be in camp by noon," Fred said.

They picked the bones clean and went on. Dave still carried the rifle. At last, down a broad reach, they saw the smoke of a camp-fire and two tents. A man was walking up from the water.



ALEC DE WITT'S keen gray eyes looked intently into the faces of the two men who staggered into camp, and he knew the essentials of their story even before

they dropped to seats beside the fire.

"Soup," Alec said. "Nothing else today."

He smiled. He did not prod their weariness with questions but built up a blaze, added water to a kettle of simmering meat, set tea to boil. Alec did not seem to hurry, but each movement was sure. Not an ax stroke was wasted as he split wood. He fed the fire cunningly, providing heat at one end for Dave and Fred, raking out coals at the other to keep the soup going.

"Knocked over a caribou a few days ago," he said.

Alec De Witt was smaller than the others, but his body was compact. Wrinkles showed through a stubble of gray brown beard and added to a look of kindness and serenity. He was nearly sixty, but his calm assurance made him appear younger and stronger.

"Go slow on it, boys," he said as he ladled broth.

Dave watched Alec. After that first searching look, the old prospector had not seemed to see Fred's black eye. He had not asked about the supplies.

The fire, hot soup and exhaustion brought quick drowsiness to Dave and Fred. Alec prepared a bed in one of the tents. Fred was asleep at once, but Dave only closed his eyes. He wished now he had spoken, had told Alec in Fred's presence.

Fred and Alec had been partners only two years, but behind that were thirty years of close association of Alec with Fred's father. When Dave Marsh joined them the previous spring Alec had never tried to hide his liking for his old partner's son. Alec would be sure to side with Fred.

Dave opened his eyes when he heard Alec walk past the tent. He saw a white feather in the air and when he lifted his head he saw Alec spreading the down robe to dry. Alec found the tear and brought needle and thread. Dave, watching him mend the slit the bullet had made, knew he must find the powder burn too.

Alec seemed not to notice, but when he had finished sewing he patted the thick folds until his fingers touched something hard. Dave watched him cut

out the chunk of lead and sew up the hole. He watched Alec examine the empty rifle and clean and oil it. Then Dave went to sleep.

Dave Marsh and Fred Sedley were different men the next morning. They had lost much weight, but the drawn look was gone from their faces and the dread of death from their eyes. Alec De Witt smiled when he saw them and ladled meat with their broth.

"Funny thing," Alec said. "I've seen Indians starved for days. They'd eat twenty pounds o' meat and nearly die of the agony. But next time they had a starvin' they'd pitch right into the meat again. Some things an Indian can't learn."

"I could eat twenty pounds of meat now," Fred said.

"That broth tickled your stomach," Alec said. "A man's guts get flat and shrunk and they've got to be opened slow or he'd think there wasn't room inside him for so much aching."

Dave sat where he could watch both men.

"Canoe and half a ton of supplies are gone," Dave said.

"I didn't think you'd walk back if it wasn't," Alec said. "But I shot two caribou while you slept yesterday."

"It wasn't a rapids," Fred said. "It was a falls. Canoe was smashed. That down robe was all that floated."

Dave waited, looking at the two men. What Fred said was true, and a lie because it did not tell everything.

"A rifle can't float," Alec said. "And you're as good in a canoe as I ever saw, Fred."

Dave looked at Fred now. Alec was sure to believe whatever Fred said. Alec had always seemed quite certain Fred was as fine as his father.

"I wasn't good enough," Fred said. "Dave thought we ought to have a look at those rips and he went down river with the rifle. I couldn't see anything bad. Got through all right to the bend. Then there wasn't a chance with twelve hundred pounds and only one man to paddle."

It had happened just that way, though Fred had neglected to state that he alone had made the decision to run strange

white water. And Fred had insinuated that he couldn't handle the craft without assistance. Alec would be wise enough to see that and ask about it, but Alec was looking at Fred's cut face and black eye.

"Then what?" Alec asked.

"Eight days," Fred said. "Two rabbits. You ain't so hungry after a while. Just weak. But your mind acts queer." He glanced at Dave. "That's eight days I'd like to forget."

Alec De Witt looked at Dave now. Alec's glance was hard and his gentle mouth was straight and grim. Dave knew that he could not keep silent any longer.

"So we'll forget it," Fred said quickly. "We've got a tough enough job ahead of us. With that grub lost, we can't stick it here like you wanted. We've got to get out while we can."

Alec glanced up. He shed the inquisitor's role. A new light came into his eyes. Dave felt his heart pounding as he looked, for he recognized the fanatical zeal of a true prospector.

"We're sticking," Alec said. "Somehow. We got to."

Fred jumped to his feet.

"You've been eating!" he exclaimed, and his voice was sharpened by both anger and fear. "You don't know what it is to starve. Be so weak you can't drag your feet, and even your brain goes woozy and you get to— Look at them!"

He held out his hands. They were thin and they trembled.

"Few days and you'll be all right," Alec said.

"And I intend to stay that way," Fred snarled. "Soon's we feed up we start for steel. This country's no good anyhow." Alec frowned. He was clearly disturbed. An anxious glance at Fred, and one swift look of suspicion at Dave, showed this.

"Shut up, Fred," Dave said. "This is a lot bigger than your belly. Alec's found something. Can't you see? It's sticking out all over him."

The gold seeker's glow was again in Alec's eyes. His voice was suddenly hoarse.

"Boys," Alec said, "I believe we've

made the biggest strike ever heard of in Canada outside the Yukon."



FRED SEDLEY sat down. His fear and anger had vanished. Alec went to a tent and returned with two small bottles. In one was a quarter of an inch of what seemed to be very fine sand or tiny crystals. Much of it was silver white.

"Never saw gold like this," Fred said.

Dave went to the tent and got a sheet of paper and a small magnet. He emptied the bottle on the paper and moved the magnet across the little heap. The two ends of the horseshoe were covered with tiny particles.

"Platinum," Dave said.

A grin puckered Alec's face and his eyes were sparkling.

"Platinum's no good," Fred said. "Pennyweight or two to the ton don't get you anything."

"Bring's more'n a hundred dollars an ounce," Dave said.

"But you've got to have better'n twenty dollar ore when you're three hundred miles from steel," Fred insisted.

Dave did not reply to that. His gaze and his mind were centered on Alec De Witt.

"That dunite outcropping we found in June?" Dave asked.

"I picked it up twice more," Alec said. "A river flowed along that low ridge. Not this river. A big one. Ages ago. About here it emptied into a lake."

"But nobody ever found platinum in this part of Canada," Fred objected.

"Nobody ever found gold in the Mother Lode in California until Marshall dug a sluiceway for Sutter's mill," Alec said.

Dave was excited. He ignored Fred. "Must be gold if with it if there's all this iron," he said. "Iridium too."

"And palladium and osmium," Alec said. "They generally come together. Point is, there's an awful lot of it."

"You can't peddle these 'iums' to mine operators," Fred scoffed. "They want gold. We got to get out before we starve."

Alec handed a second bottle to Fred. It was half full of brown and yellow flakes and tiny chunks.

"I panned this and the other together," Alec said. "You can see the proportion. Spent nights here by the fire, separating the two with a buckskin needle. Near as I can make out, the gold will run about fifty dollars to the ton on the surface of this alluvial deposit. But the deeper I went the more platinum I got. No telling what will be at the bottom."

Alec was on his feet now. The old prospector was excited as Dave had never seen him. He had forgotten all about the loss of the canoe load of supplies.

"Then the gold can pay all the expenses," Dave said. "The platinum and platinum metals might run several hundred dollars. How much of this deposit is there, Alec?"

"That's what we got to stay for," Alec said. "I want to sink a shaft to know how deep this is and I want to find the limits of the old river delta. Got to have a pretty accurate report to get the right people interested."

Fred Sedley had listened carefully. He turned the two bottles around and watched the flow of white and yellow particles.

"You mean, Alec, we've got enough of this to run hundreds to the ton?" Fred asked. "This is a big deposit?"

"Fred, I'd give my share of it if your dad was alive and here with me," Alec said. "No man ever had a better partner or one with tougher luck. He came close to striking it big a couple o' times but never anything like this. I wish he was here, but the next best thing is having you in on it. Boys, this is a strike!"



THEY talked of nothing else until noon. Alec had done much work since making the discovery, and they wanted every detail of it. Dave was the quieter of the two, and asked the more intelligent questions. Most of his life had been spent in the deep wilderness and he had Alec De Witt's passion for prospecting. Dave was concerned with technical details. Fred talked only of the extent of the alluvial deposit and dollars per ton.

After the noon meal Alec went up river in a birch bark canoe to get the two cari-

bou he had shot. Dave and Fred lay around camp, resting, eating stew meat. They were always hungry.

"Looks like we don't have to work again, feller," Fred said.

"Alec knows his stuff," Dave said. "Why didn't you tell him what happened?"

"You heard me tell him."

"Part of the canoe business. But he's been looking at your black eye."

Fred went to a tent and got a shaving mirror.

"I'd forgotten that," he said. "We'll both forget it."

"Alec's blaming me," Dave said. "There's no reason why I should let him."

"Tell him if you want to. Only it don't amount to anything now. I was out of my head, Dave. You know that. I was so weak and dizzy I went plain nuts."

"We may get into that jam again," Dave said.

"You needn't worry," Fred said. "I've had my lesson. Besides, look what we're going to get out of this. We're going to be rich! No more knocking around the bush for me."

"All right," Dave said. "We'll forget it."

Fred kept the fire going that afternoon, and a kettle of meat stewing. Dave gathered firewood. His strength seemed to come back faster and he wondered if Fred's fear and hopelessness on the trail had caused a greater drain.

But Fred's spirits revived. He had always been a happy camp companion with a stock of jokes that he could twist to fit the moment. He had never shirked his share of the work. He had a good supper ready when Alec returned.

"I've been wondering about this strike," Fred said after they had eaten. "If it's as rich as you think, seems to me we three have earned something pretty big."

"Sure we have," Alec agreed.

"We've found it, done the work, run the risks," Fred said.

"Walt Lawrie grubstaked us," Alec said, "and that gives Walt half of anything we find."

"He'd be satisfied with a lot less," Fred said.

"And Walt wouldn't 'a' said a word if we'd come back without a speck of color. Your dad knew that, Fred."

"Walt gambles what we've got to have and we gamble with the only thing we can put up," Dave said. "It's plenty fair."

"I can see that," Fred agreed, "but I was thinking about selling. What if this is worth millions? So far from steel, an operator will offer us fifty thousand dollars. Walt Lawrie gets half and we get eight thousand apiece. Nothing fair in that."

"Which we knew when we came up here," Alec said. "Any man who buys from us, taking chances so far from transportation, is going to want all or nothing."

"May be, but it don't seem right," Fred said. "I don't want to see some city bird get rich when he never misses a meal and I starve for a few thousands. It ain't square."

"We'll get the best price we can," Alec said. "We can't do any more."

The next morning, when Alec prepared to go the prospect, Dave went with him.

"I can't do much," he said, "but I want to see this."

"I'll be along tomorrow," Fred said cheerfully.

Alec De Witt walked slowly on the trail he had made in the swamp. After they had gone a mile he stopped.

"Take it easy," he said. "We'll have a pipe."

He whittled a plug and ground the tobacco in his palm.

"You had the rifle when the canoe was lost," Alec said. "You came into camp with it."

"I didn't carry it all the time," Dave said.

Alec took a chunk of lead from a pocket. It was unmistakably a bullet.

"If one man carried the rifle, the other carried the down robe on his back," Alec said. "You know where I got this?"

"If you want to find out anything, why don't you ask Fred and me together?" Dave demanded.

"I'm asking you now," Alec said.

Dave considered this. He admired Alec. The prospector was his own kind,

He whirled . . . and let the pack fly



a man who knew the bush and its ways and its code. But Alec could not forget his thirty years with Fred Sedley's father. Dave had seen how the old man unquestioningly accepted Fred as a replica of his former partner. Alec had accorded to Fred all the virtues of the elder Sedley. He had transferred affection and faith untouched.

"I'll tell you," Dave said, "if you ask me in front of Fred."

Alec stood up and put the bullet in a pocket.

"I don't have to ask Fred anything," Alec said. "I've known him since he was born. I knew his father better'n I knew myself and Fred's just like him. I'd trust either one, anywhere, any time."

"Meaning you don't trust me?" Dave asked.

"I never saw you till last winter," Alec said. "Not till Fred and I took you as a partner because you knew this country and had a dog team."

"Found anything wrong with me?"

"Not a thing," Alec said. "I've liked everything I've seen about you. Only you don't know and you can't tell what any man will do when he's up against slow death."

"You're guessing what I did," Alec

said bitterly. "And how can you be so sure of Fred?"

"I'm sure of Fred. I know the stock."

"If you don't ask Fred, I will," Dave said. "Tonight."



ALEC went on without speaking. He and Dave spent the day digging test holes and getting samples. Dave was too weak to help much, but he could see what the prospect held. By noon he had forgotten Fred. Alec seemed to have forgotten the bullet in his pocket. They had no room in their minds for anything except the astounding riches beneath their feet. It was dark when they reached camp. Fred had supper ready.

Fred was always like that. It was one of the qualities Dave had liked. Fred never complained when the going was tough, never dodged work. He took the heaviest packs on a portage and pulled as hard on a paddle at night as in the morning. Fred never grumbled, never was morose.

He was cheerful now, even gay, as he asked about the work and looked at the samples. But Dave decided to speak immediately after supper. This thing had to be cleared up.

Alec helped himself to the meat stew and sat down. Like all bushmen, he was silent at meals, but now he looked up.

"Fred," he began abruptly, "how come a bullet hit that robe and you got a black eye?"

Fred was bending over his plate and he took another big mouthful of meat. He was grinning when he looked up.

"I was ashamed to tell you that, Alec," Fred said. "Must have been because I was so weak. But when I fell over a windfall the rifle went off. Dave was ahead and the robe was on his back."

"It wasn't Dave that shot?" Alec asked.

"Course not," Fred laughed. "But I asked him to keep quiet about it. Never was clumsy that way before."

"Then how come the black eye?"

"Dave hit me," Fred said. "But that's all right. We were both out of our heads. Dave thought I'd taken a shot at him. To get all the rabbit. He just lit into me."

Alec De Witt laughed. It was more than amusement. The old prospector was relieved. Dave understood that Alec's faith may have been shaken but that it was firmly reestablished. Nothing that might be said now, Dave knew, could change Alec's mind.

They ate supper. Afterward Alec crushed ore in a mortar and washed it in a gold pan. It was the best sample he had taken, and after that the talk was wholly of the wealth they had uncovered and of plans.

"It will take two men more'n a month to finish this job," Alec said. "That's Fred and me. Dave is the best hunter and he knows this kind of country. We'll need a lot of meat. When it looks like freeze-up, Dave can get his team."

Discussion of plans fell largely to Alec and Dave. Fred had never been far from a railroad. He was accustomed to abundant food supplies and modern equipment and he could not offer anything on tanning skins for moccasins and mittens, making snowshoes or drying meat and fish. Dave accepted these tasks as routine.

"We'll have a big load," Alec said. "Dogs can't haul their own grub from here to steel."

"I'll get fish from the old Cree who's taking care of the dogs," Dave said. "We can pick it up and make through."

"Why don't we swing over to the H.B.C. outpost on Simpson Lake?" Fred asked. "We could get grub there."

"All right if a white man was in charge," Dave said. "But the half-breed won't give credit and we spent our last money on the stuff that was lost."

"Just enough left to pay the Cree for taking care of the dogs," Alec added.

"The H.B.C. always helps a man in trouble," Fred insisted.

"A white manager would," Dave said. "But the breed has no authority. Somebody skipped out on him once and he won't trust anyone."

The next morning Alec departed early. Fred was to follow later. He was still weak. Dave set the fish net below camp.

"You slipped that over fast," Dave said when he returned.

Fred laughed.

"Anyhow, it's settled," he said.

"That part of it is settled," Dave said. "Alec won't believe anything else now. But next time you don't get off."

"What do you mean, next time?" Fred demanded.

"Next time you're starving," Dave said. "We're three hundred miles from steel. In winter. We haven't any grub."

"Forget it," Fred said gruffly. "I learned my lesson."

"I'm the one who learned the lesson," Dave said.

CHAPTER II

PRISON OF THE NORTH



DAVE and Fred grew stronger each day and were soon up to capacity. Fred and Alec departed for the prospect before dawn each morning and did not return until after dark.

Dave kept the net going and they had two meals of whitefish and one of caribou each day.

Dave built racks, poles laid on frames, split the fish down the back bone and hung them to dry. When he felt that his strength had returned he went in search of caribou.

Sometimes he was gone a night or two, packing the meat to the river and then bringing it to camp in the birch bark canoe.

Alec and Fred worked while there was daylight. The old river delta was much larger than Alec had expected.

"Must have been a regular Mississippi," he chuckled one night. "We're a mile farther west and still find plenty of color."

Fred was enthusiastic. No effort was too great for him.

"He's as good as a steam shovel," Alec said.

Days were much shorter. After supper Alec panned the samples brought in and Fred worked on a windlass for the shaft. Dave had soaked several caribou hides in a lye made of ashes, and now he scraped off the hair and fleshed them. Afterwards he rubbed the animal's brains into the skins and finally soaked them in clear water and then spent hours pulling the leather until it was dry. Fred

helped with this and after the skins had been smoked they were cut and sewed into hooded parkas and moccasins.

Other skins were left with the hair on. Dave rubbed the brains and a little salt into the flesh side, rinsed and pulled them dry and then sewed them together for a sleeping robe. With the two down robes, they were now equipped for winter.

Snow squalls had come, and when the weather was clear, frosts were heavy.

"We're all set," Alec said one night. "Been a lot of work but we've got something to show for it."

"I'd better go for the dogs tomorrow or I'll be froze in," Dave said.

"Yes," Alec agreed. "You and Fred."

"What you mean, Fred?" Dave demanded. "He won't be any help to me and you need him here."

"We've got a big thing," Alec said. "Biggest I ever saw. It's too big to take chances on a slip-up."

"What you been telling Alec, Fred?" Dave asked. "You been falling down over more windfalls and shooting more robes?"

"I didn't tell him anything," Fred said. "It's like Alec says. This is big. If you didn't get back—"

"I'll get back," Dave broke in angrily. "How you feel about it, Alec?"

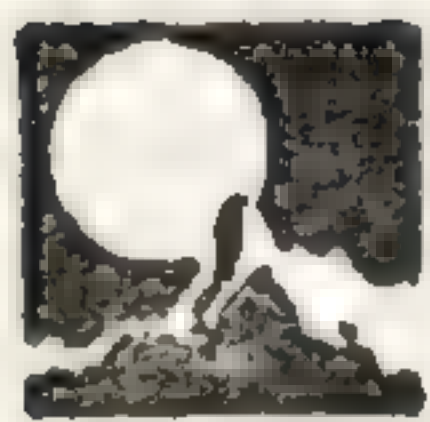
"Fred should go with you," Alec said. "We've got to play this safe—every way."

"You think I'd skip out on you, file on these claims? You wouldn't think that, Alec, unless Fred had been talking. All right. I'll talk. Fred stays here or I don't go."

"You've got no right—" Alec began.

"I've got this right," Dave said. "I'm the only one who knows where the Cree is keeping my dogs. I go alone or we don't have a team. Fred won't help me any. I'm tired of being the outsider in this crew."

Fred had nothing more to say. Alec spoke only once. Dave saw that the old prospector was baffled. Dave liked Alec. He had a warm affection for him because Alec had the qualities he admired most. Alec knew the bush and its ways. The only trouble was, Alec believed Fred Sedley was a replica of his father.



DAVE started the next morning. He took a robe, the toboggan tarp for shelter, dried meat and two raw hides, a burden that permitted him to carry everything, including the craft in one trip across portages.

Snow drove before a northeast wind when he started. Ice formed on the edges of quiet sloughs and muskeg ponds. To avoid being caught by winter, Dave was paddling an hour before dawn and an hour after darkness. Camp making was only a gesture. He stretched the tarp as shelter against snow, cut a few boughs to lay between himself and the cold ground, built a small fire to boil meat. After supper and a pipe, he rolled in the down robe and was asleep at once.

The night of the third day he broke ice with the paddle to reach a lake shore above which sparks were soaring from the crossed poles of a wigwam. A pack of snarling, yelping dogs barred his way until he spoke, and then after an instant of stunned silence five joy-maddened animals swarmed into the canoe.

"Down, boys!" Dave commanded, but there was only affection in his voice, and dogs leaped to reach his face with long tongues or grasped his trouser legs to shake them with fierce tenderness.

The wigwam flap was lifted and an old Cree came out. He had brought the team from an island only that afternoon because he feared ice would form in the night.

"I knew you would come," he ended his report.

The dogs were in splendid shape. Dave inspected harness and toboggan and learned that mice and weather had not damaged them. For long hours that night he sat beside the fire and listened to the old Cree and his wife tell minute details of their custody.

Winter came that night, but it was several days before the large lake froze and permitted travel. Dave was counting on this and had brought several long strips of birch he had hewed and seasoned by the fire. Now the Cree pared them down with his crooked canoe knife, steamed them, bent them into proper snowshoe shape and burned holes through the frame for stringing.

Dave hunted meat while this work was done. The woman prepared the two raw hides and cut them into thongs, the thick back in wide strips for heavy webbing between crossbars, the thin belly pieces into small cords for the finer mesh at the ends.

All three worked at stringing the snowshoes by the fire at night, while a kettle of meat simmered and much laughter defied the winter that battered the lonely wigwam.

A week after his arrival, Dave started north. The dogs fought for the privilege of being harnessed first. Each ran to his place in front of the lightly loaded toboggan, trembling with excitement while he waited for the traces to be snapped. Dave had a word and a pat for each, and each dog looked up ecstatically when his name was spoken.

The third night Dave reached the camp on Boiling Sand River in time to have supper with Alec and Fred.

"I came back," Dave said when he had taken his plate of meat from the kettle.

"Sure," Fred said. "I knew you would. Alec knew it."

"You boys quit jawing," Alec said. "We got too much at stake."

"Then you got to trust your pardner," Dave said. "I can trust you, Alec. I'd trust you anywhere. No matter what happened. If you'd use your head you'd know you can trust me."

"You leaving me out?" Fred asked.

"I'm leaving you out," Dave said. "And you know why."

"You boys quit jawing," Alec repeated. "After thirty years I've made a big strike, and I'm not letting a couple o' snapping pups cheat me out of it."

They ate then. After supper Alec told Dave that the shaft was down ten feet.

"And ore bearing all the way," Alec said. "This is a long way from steel, but mining will be easy. Just clear the land and use tractors and scrapers."

"Dirt's richer the deeper we go," Fred said.

He was excited. He did not show resentment of what Dave had said. Fred elaborated on each of Alec's mild statements with exultant superlatives.

"Cribbing the shaft?" Dave asked.

"Won't have to, way the ground's freezing," Alec said. "I'd like to go thirty feet, if we don't hit hard pan."

Alec brought a map from the tent, a large scale sketch he had drawn. More than sixty prospect holes were shown. Limits of the old river delta were plotted and claim lines indicated.

"Better than a thousand acres," Alec said, and the excitement in his voice startled Dave. "Every hole has been at least three feet below top soil, so we're sure of five million yards of alluvial deposit. Might be three or four times that. What if it only ran a dollar a yard?"

The two younger men did not speak as they stared at Alec. They knew they had struck rich dirt, but neither had made even a rough estimate of what the total could be.

"I think, boys, that I'm on my last prospecting trip," Alec said.

Fred jumped up in his excitement. His face was grim.

"We've got to plan this right!" he exclaimed. "No letting some big outfit beat us down. I intend to be paid for that starving I took. Those days, dragging my feet, skull grinning over my shoulder—I'm not going to let some pot-bellied slob in a city get richer on it than I do."

"You'll be rich enough," Alec said.

"But big operators who buy prospects never starve," Fred said. "They let some soft-headed boob do the hunting and

then they make the money out of it. I'm not going to be a sap."

"Plenty of time to talk all that," Alec said. "Each of us has got a sixth interest in this. We'll get together with Walt Laurie and decide."

"We ain't out to steel yet," Dave added. "That old Cree said we're in for a tough winter."

"That's all right," Fred said. "I get riled up when I think of somebody grabbing what we starved for."

"Forget that starving," Dave said. "It ain't doing you or us any good to talk about it."



THE next morning all three went to the prospect shaft. The hole was less than three feet square. The windlass stood over it and Alec was lowered in a bucket on a rope.

"Ground's froze five or six inches," he called up after swinging a pick. "Be through that in a hurry."

They remained while there was daylight. Dave spelled Alec in the digging. Fred had tried it but was too big to work efficiently in the hole. His strength lifted the bucket easily and the mound of earth beside the hole grew larger.

Alec examined the sides of the shaft while he was down. They seemed like cement, having frozen solidly, but when the bottom was three feet lower that day the ground became soft and water

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began to run perceptibly into the shaft.

"We may have to crib it," Alec said. "That will slow us. But with cold weather the sides ought to freeze solid."

"And may be that water running in won't let more'n the surface freeze," Dave objected. "Getting softer all the time down there, and deeper we go the more pressure."

"Sixteen feet proves a lot," Fred said.

"If we can prove twice as much, we'll have something to sell," Alec insisted.

Winter had come suddenly and solidly before Dave left the Cree's camp, and now on clear nights the temperature went to thirty below zero. A foot of snow lay on the ground and it never thawed, even under a bright noon sun.

The shaft froze again. Water had run in and was ice when they went to work the next morning, and this had to be chopped out before they could begin digging. After pick and shovel were again in soft earth, more seepage began and progress was slow and difficult. The man below was splashed with water and his feet became wet, for they had no rubber boots. They made only a yard that day, a yard the next, but each evening the pan showed color.

The sky clouded and snow fell. The temperature rose in the night. When the men reached the shaft, Dave dropped a small stone. They heard water splash.

"It's soft," Dave warned as Alec stepped into the bucket. "Go careful."

Fred lowered him and fastened the windlass crank. Dawn was breaking and the shaft was dark.

"Soft and plenty wet," Alec called up. "We'll have to crib or wait until—"

A gentle, squashy sound came up the shaft. Dave heard a faint cry.

"You caught?" he yelled.

Alec did not answer. Dave threw a leg around the rope, released his hold on the drum and slid from sight.

He found Alec's shoulders and the top of his head above the soft wet earth and began digging desperately with his hands to free the old prospector's nose and mouth. His fingers were bleeding before he succeeded, but when he was sure Alec was breathing he began at once to dig down below the armpits.

"He alive?" Fred called.

"But only his head's out," Dave panted. "Pail and shovel buried."

He kept scooping with his hands until he could get them beneath Alec's arms. Then, bracing, he began to pull. All he could do was straighten the body. He could feel the legs loosen.

"Can't budge him!" Dave called. "Got to dig him out."

He knew how hopeless that was. He had only his hands and nothing in which to send earth to the surface.

The shaft was darkened completely. The rope shivered, and Fred slid down beside him.

"You're crazy!" Dave said. "Ought to have one man on top."

"To run for help, I suppose," Fred said.

He had much more physical strength than Dave, but the shaft was so small he stooped with difficulty. His back struck the sides and earth started to crumble.

Dave could only crowd himself into a corner and stand erect.

Fred grunted as he began to pull. More earth dropped and Fred pressed his broad back against the side to hold it. Dave, reaching out, felt what he was doing.

"We could get the rope under his arms and use the windlass," Dave said.

"And haul him apart," Fred grunted.

He was pulling harder now. Earth rattled down. Dave reached out both ways and found the sides giving.

"We'll all be buried!" he yelled.

Fred did not answer. Dave laid a hand on his back and it straightened, rose higher.

More earth cascaded. Fred leaned back against it.

"Pull him—clear," he panted. "I'll hold this."

Fred braced himself. Dave could scarcely reach down to Alec. The prospector was free to the hips. Dave got one arm around his body and began to pull.

"She's all coming!" Fred gasped.

They had Alec's limp form between them now, but two sides were caving with a rush. The men felt the earth cover their feet and began to jerk clear.

They treadled frantically, lifting Alec.

Mud gripped their moccasins. It was like running up a steep hill, with leaden shoes, with death holding their heels.

Suddenly their feet were free. They swayed against frozen, solid sides of the shaft. Both men knew they were safe and for a long moment they leaned there, panting, letting Alec slump in arms so weak they could scarcely hold him.

"Shin up and loosen the crank," Fred said at last. "I'll cut the rope and make a sling under his arms."

Getting Alec to the surface was not difficult, but they could only lay him, wet and muddy, in the snow. They had no shelter, no blankets. They did not know how badly hurt he was.

"Start a fire," Dave said. "I'll bring the dogs."



ALEC did not recover consciousness until night. By that time he was warm and dry in a new camp built specially for him. Dave made a raised bed of poles covered with thick boughs. He stretched a toboggan tarp at an angle to reflect heat from a huge fire and keep off snow. He banked the ends with brush to prevent draughts and had placed the camp among spruce saplings where wind seldom reached. Fred cut a large quantity of wood for a continuous day and night fire.

The old prospector was in so much pain that Dave gave him morphine. Alec seemed paralyzed from the shoulders down and there was a big lump on his right temple.

Dave sat beside Alec all night, dozing until the fire burned down and cold wakened him to replenish it. Snow ceased falling and as the sky cleared the temperature dropped rapidly.

Fred cooked breakfast. He had said little since the accident, had left the nursing to Dave.

"Now what?" Fred asked after they had eaten.

"Get him to steel," Dave said.

"Three hundred miles? He's in bad shape."

"Back might be broke, the way he acts," Dave said. "He can't stand riding on the toboggan yet."

Fred was moodily silent for awhile. "One of us should go out for help," he said.

"Go where?" Dave asked. "What help? We can do all that can be done."

"We need men and dogs," Fred said. "Breaking trail, making camp—dogs can't haul their own grub, let alone Alec."

"We can do it," Dave said.

"It's taking a chance. I can get through to that H.B.C. post. I got to. We can't risk losing this big strike."

"No use to go there without money," Dave said.

Alec awakened after daylight.

"It's my back," he said. "Low down. Can't move."

"You must have been stooping over," Fred said. "Pulling didn't help you any."

"First cave snapped the shovel over and knocked me out," Alec whispered. "Or I might have kept free."

Dave tucked the robe and blankets close.

"Don't worry," he said. "We'll get you to a doctor."

Dave took the dogs and went up river in search of large birch trees and it was dark before he returned with two roughly hewed planks. Fred had given Alec more morphine.

"And we're still three hundred miles from steel," Fred said.

Dave thought of little else. The snake-like action of a toboggan on a rough trail would mean agony for Alec. Before the accident Dave had known the dogs could not draw their food so far, and now they would have the added burden of 150 pounds. Care of the injured man would slow them down, cut travel time, mean added work. The men could not carry enough food for themselves, and it was the seventh year for rabbits.

"A few years and prospectors will come in and out by plane," Dave said.

"Make steel from here in half a day," Fred said. "But that don't help us any. We got to do something."

"We're doing it," Dave said.

Dave filed an ax blade thin and honed the bit to razor keenness. For hours he hewed the birch until he had two smooth

planks ten feet long, seven inches wide and tapering in thickness from a quarter of an inch near one end to less at the other.

He hewed cross pieces and burned holes through them and the planks with the heated tang of an old file, counter-sinking and grooving the holes for the strips of rawhide with which he finally bound the toboggan together. One end was steamed in boiling water and bent upward, the hood held by thongs.

Alec said little, never complained, but he was powerless to move and his face told how he suffered. Dave watched him anxiously while he attended to the nursing and prepared for the journey out.

"How'd you get me out?" Alec asked one day when Fred was cutting wood.

"Fred did it," Dave said. "Hadn't been for him, you'd have been done for. I couldn't budge you."

"He's husky."

"Fred had nerve," Dave said. "Slid down that rope and held one side of the shaft with his back while he pulled you free."

"Fred's like his father," Alec said. "I could always depend on Mark Sedley. You can depend on Fred."



DAVE did not comment. He did not wish to disturb Alec. But Dave was disturbed. Fred was no longer good-natured.

He complained of their waiting. He painted gloomy pictures of the task before them. He insisted that he should go to the H.B.C. outpost for help. Fred showed more concern for their claims than for Alec.

"We didn't post notices at the north-west corner or blaze the rest of the north line," Fred said one night.

He spoke in front of Alec. Dave wanted to object. He offered to go and do it.

"You stay here," Fred said. "Those dogs need watching. They won't mind any one but you."

Fred departed early the next morning with a rifle, though caribou were not expected in that direction. Dave saw that he had only the rifle and an ax, no food, but even then Dave waited anxiously until Fred returned after dark to report that he had found caribou tracks

but had followed them to no purpose.

"We could use more fresh meat," Fred said. "You don't feed your dogs enough."

Dave had finished rebuilding the toboggan, stretching sides and ends around a birch frame. He used caribou hide and pieces of a tent, made a mattress of carefully dried moss. When they started, Alec would be able to lie at full length, wrapped snugly in the down robes.

"Two dogs can pull him and some grub," Dave said. "The other three will have to lug the rest, with us helping."

"That'll be some job, breaking trail and all," Fred said. "And some load."

Dave had estimated that carefully.

"Six hundred and fifty pounds," he said. "Too much."

The dogs had been nervous all evening. One growled and started up river, the others after him. Dave ran outside the firelight. Against the snow on the ice he saw dark shapes crossing the stream toward the west. The dogs gave tongue and raced away.

"Caribou," Dave said. "If they make a stand we'll lose half that team."

Dave followed tracks of dogs and deer all that night. Travel was strenuous there were nearly two feet of snow—but he did not dare rest. All the team was necessary to get Alec out to steel, and should the caribou stop and show fight, a slashing hoof or impaling antler might cause the death of one or more dogs.

By morning the dogs had outdistanced him. He kept on until noon when he met them returning. They were tired and ashamed. When he had examined each one, knew none was injured, he turned back.

The weather was clear and cold. A full moon came up, and at midnight, as Dave crossed a bit of muskeg, he saw the print of snowshoes going south. He followed to timber and there found blazed trees he recognized. This was the west line of their claims.

Back in the muskeg, Dave saw that his own snowshoe prints were on top of the stranger's. He examined them closely now, compared them with his own. They were longer and he was satisfied they had been made by Fred Sedley's webs.

Dave went on. A half mile farther he crossed more prints, this time going north on a lot line. Fred had reported that he went only along the north line, had followed caribou tracks toward the northwest.

Dave was exhausted when he reached camp. He ate a little, rolled in his robe, did not waken until noon. Across the fire, Alec De Witt was sitting on his bed.

"I'm ready to start," the old prospector said. "Can't keep you boys here all winter."

"Your back isn't broken," Dave said.

"Course not," Alec said. "I can travel."

His face was drawn by pain. He kept his lips tight when he spoke. Dave could see that Alec was sitting up only by great effort. Riding on the toboggan would be torture.

"He's ready," Fred said.

Fred spoke eagerly, and Dave thought of the snowshoe tracks on the west lot lines. Fred had started south, alone, and lost his nerve.

"Alec ain't well enough to travel yet," Dave said.

"I'm plenty well," Alec retorted. "All nonsense, sitting here when we might be traveling out."

Dave watched this show of courage with troubled eyes. Alec was that sort, game as old bush men always are. It was their code to belittle pain, to refuse to be a burden on their partners. Dave had always liked Alec De Witt, but since Alec's injury a deep affection had developed for the old man. That courage deserved reward. Dave did not worry about Alec's suspicions of him or his

"You caught?" he yelled.



faith in Fred. That was only part of his character, a carry-over of his unshakable loyalty to Mark Sedley, Fred's father.



DAVE offered to take a load of meat and fish a hundred miles south and cache it. It would give Alec a chance to gain strength, but Alec and Fred beat down his arguments. They started before dawn the next morning.

The dogs were eager and lunged against their collars at the word. Feet dug into the trail and sent snow flying. Joe and Jeff hauled Alec and did not like being in the rear, pulled frantically in an effort to join the other three. The team had never been separated and they did not understand.

Fred went ahead, breaking trail. For a few miles this was not difficult. Dave had been up river and only a little snow lay on the bottom of the trench that

snowshoes and toboggan had made. But soon they got a taste of what they could expect.

The long straight reaches of the river were behind them now. The stream turned and twisted. One big oxbow bend entailed three miles of travel to gain less than a mile.

"Wish they'd hurry those airplanes," Fred said.

The river offered obstacles. It became swifter and rapids and falls were frequent. These meant portages, rough going among rocks and through brush on narrow crooked paths. Alec's toboggan, pliant and weighted, twisted to conform with each bump and hollow and the old prospector was racked by constant movement. In places the grade was so steep that Dave and Fred had to break a trail, return to help the dogs haul the heavy loads and then snub the toboggans on the slopes back to the river.

"We didn't get far," Fred said when they stopped at noon.

Though the temperature was low, his hair was damp from perspiration. He stared at the unbroken snow ahead and at a black bend across the river which meant rapids and another portage.

Dave Marsh did not comment. He had expected slow progress and knew what conditions would be, but in tugging at Alec's toboggan, easing it down grades and past obstructions, in watching its constant racking motion, he had not been able to escape sight of Alec's face or thought of how he must be suffering.

That afternoon they found a fresh difficulty. Water flowed over the ice from a rapids above. Fred, on snowshoes, did not notice it lying under the snow, but the dog's feet broke through and were coated with ice. Dave saw the black holes in the trail and quickly led them ashore.

The dogs dropped in the soft snow and began biting and licking at their encrusted feet. Dave took off his mittens and helped them thaw the ice loose with his bare hands, called Fred to do likewise.

"We can't afford lame dogs," Dave said.

A half hour was lost. When they went

on, the man who broke trail carried a pole and felt for water beneath the snow. Sometimes it covered the river and they were forced to take the rough going ashore. Men and dogs were exhausted as the early darkness came, but they kept going for another hour before Dave called a halt. Alec De Witt lay with closed eyes. He did not speak or move until supper was ready.

Snow was cleared, wood cut, a fire started. Dave unharnessed the dogs and fed them. At command, each animal lay down and held up his feet. The inspection pleased them, for they knew its value. For a long time after eating they licked their paws, removing the last particles of ice and packed snow and healing tender spots.

"They've had a tough day," Dave said.

"So did we," Fred said. "I feel as if I'd pulled as much as they did, besides breaking trail."

After hot tea and meat, Alec asked to be lifted to a seat beside the fire.

"It gives me a new kind of ache," he said.

His grin did not deceive them. A little later he was wrapped up for the night. Dave called three dogs and they snuggled close to the old prospector on the side away from the fire. Soon he felt the warmth of their bodies and dropped off to sleep. The next morning they were on their way two hours before dawn.

After only one day's struggle, men and dogs felt the strain. The dogs were willing enough. They crowded about Dave for the honor of being harnessed first, threw themselves against the collars to start the toboggans, and every hair was vibrant with furious effort. But that effort was required constantly. Snow packed on the newly broken trail before the hood of the lead toboggan. Footing was soft and always the loads were too heavy for the number of animals. Never was there the exhilaration of a swift dash that sledge dogs love.

The work was as punishing for Dave and Fred. Their webs sank a foot into soft snow and it was necessary to lift them straight up, carrying a fluffy burden for the next step. This brought into

play muscles seldom used, caused *mal de racquette*, and the pain in their shins became excruciating. Ice formed on snowshoe thongs and chafed the skin and flesh across their feet. Trail breaking was so strenuous that the men changed places in the lead each quarter of a mile. Always they had the tugging, lifting and straining on portages and when forced ashore by water.

Day after day it continued. More snow fell and added to the labor. Intense cold followed and men's shoulders and dogs' backs carried a coat of ice, congealed moisture from their breaths. At the end of each day's toil came the imperative tasks of camp making, fuel gathering, cooking, care of the dogs and of the helpless Alec.

Alec never complained. He was cheerful when all three smoked a pipe at night and he praised their progress. Dave, watching this steady courage, became more tireless in his attentions.

"Gamest man I ever saw," he said when he and Fred changed places in the lead.

"But what's it get us?" Fred demanded. "We'll never make steel."

"We'll make it," Dave said.

"I was right in the first place. I ought to have gone out to get help. But you had to have your own way. Bull-headed like last time."

"I wouldn't talk about last time." Dave said. "You're turning yellow now like you did then."

CHAPTER III

DEATH TRAIL



DAVE went on, breaking trail. Anger was a spur for awhile, but in the end it became a drain on his energy. Fred had ceased to work willingly. He complained. He left tasks for Dave.

Dave only drove the harder. His long slender body seemed as tough as the rawhide of his snowshoes. No matter how great his weariness, a tougher spirit could extract new effort from weary muscles.

As days passed that spirit became the predominant feature of their strug-

gle. The dogs acknowledged it with lifted tails and bright eyes. Alec, tortured by pain, responded to it constantly.

The loads grew lighter. Each night Dave carefully selected fish for the dogs, torn between a desire to keep up the strength of the weary animals and the necessity of making the supply last. Fred watched him one night.

"That fish won't last," Fred said. "I knew this idea of yours was crazy."

"We'll get more fish from the Cree," Dave answered.

They went on. Two dogs were limping, but ignoring the pain with that fine valor of the dog that works.

One noon they approached the camp of the old Cree. They had been on the trail six and a half days and had made only a third of the distance to steel. Dave stopped on the lake. He could not see smoke coming from the wigwam. When he went closer he could not see the wigwam.

They climbed the bank. The last snow was unbroken. A pole held a note, written on birchbark in sign language and telling that the old couple had departed because of the dearth of rabbits, but had kept faith. An arrow pointed to a cache of fish.

The cache had been raided. A carcajou had climbed to the platform and ripped loose the covering. What he could not eat or drag away he had defiled. When Dave offered a fish to the leader, Jake, the hungry dog, drew away with lips curling above white fangs.

Dave Marsh tossed the fish aside.

"Dogs will eat anything if they're hungry," Fred said.

"Smell of it!" Dave flared.

Fred looked about the deserted camp.

"Even the Indians are starved out," he said. "What chance have we got?"

"We've got grub," Dave said. "We'll make it last. Cut rations in half. For dogs and for us."

"Where did the Indians go?" Fred asked.

"May be to the H.B.C. on Simpson Lake," Dave said.

"That's where we got to go."

"No," Dave said. "It's out of the way. No help there."



TRAVEL was better on the big lake. Wind had blown the snow away in places, and breaking trail was not difficult. The dogs responded gallantly. They did not stop to rest so often. But three were limping.

Dave did not intend to tell Alec of the loss of the fish cache, but after supper Fred spoke of it. Fred was angry.

"We can't travel in winter without grub," he said. "I'm hungry now. Look at the dogs sniffing for crumbs."

"You traveled eight days with practically no grub," Dave said. "You'll do it again."

The next day they left the lake for a river. It was small and twisted maddeningly. Rapids and falls were numerous and portages difficult. The toboggan loads were much less now, but snow was deep and unbroken and strength of dogs and men were less.

Fred Sedley's pace slackened. His movements were slower when they struggled with the toboggans on portages. He cursed and complained when Dave forced the pace.

Dave's efforts had increased. He was accustomed not only to sustained exertion but, what is more important, to acceptance of it. He was leaner and his face grew grim as Fred's surliness became more pronounced. Dave was breaking trail one day when he heard a dog yelp. Dave whirled and saw Fred striking Jeff, leader of the second team.

Dave came rushing back, dry snow flying in a cloud from his webs, head thrust out from the hood of his parka. All the dogs were cowering and whining. Dave plowed on until he was facing Fred, and he slammed his snowshoes down on the other's.

"Hit one of my dogs again and I'll give you ten times the beating he gets!" Dave said.

His voice was low, but each word packed fury. Fred tried to draw back, but his webs were anchored by Dave's weight.

"He's quitting on us," Fred said. "Think I'm going to pull while he loaf?"

Jeff's not quitting. He's been pulling his heart out for ten days and he's lame. Look here."

He patted the dog, told him to lie down, lifted a front paw. The soft flesh between two pads had been split. Blood oozed from a two inch gash. Dave jumped up and once more he pinned Fred's snowshoes down.

"Every dog will pull until he dies in the traces," Dave said. "You ought to be as good as they are."

Fred tried to draw away but could not. They were close to the last toboggan and Alec lifted himself painfully.

"What's the matter?" Alec asked.

"He's beating my dogs," Dave said. "I'll beat him if he touches one again."

"You're too ready with those fists," Alec said. "You beat Fred before for no cause."

"If you could sit up in that toboggan and see what's going on, you'd know I've got cause."

He turned and went forward. He patted each dog, calling him by name. They jumped to their feet and wriggled their delight, and when the word came they broke out the toboggan and tugged furiously in the trail their master made.



NO ONE referred to the incident that night. Alec did not wish to sit up for supper. The old prospector's voice was faint and he seemed near collapse. He went to sleep beside the fire while the others were still eating.

"Now we've got to get out—fast," Dave whispered.

"We can't go faster," Fred said.

"We've got to."

They did. Dave was up earlier. He broke trail most of the day, thrusting his webs against snow and gritting his teeth against pain and exhaustion. He kept going long after dark, did not stop until he found a snowshoe trail on a small lake.

The dogs whined and growled, and when Dave looked to the right he saw a fire on shore.

A Cree was on his way home from the H.B.C. outpost on Simpson Lake. He had a few pounds of flour and some dried fish, enough for reaching his wigwam. The outpost, he said, was almost bare of supplies. Several Indian hunters and their families had gathered

there because they were starving in the bush without rabbits. The half-breed manager acted like a *weeteego*, abusing everyone, trying to drive the hunters away, debating whether he should send for help from the post a hundred miles beyond, afraid to decide anything.

Dave interpreted this. Fred asked how far the outpost was and the Indian said a man could reach it in a day on the well broken trail.

"Fifty miles," Dave explained.

Fred was excited. He wanted to turn east at once.

"Why?" Dave asked. "It only puts us farther from steel."

"But we can get grub," Fred said.

"They haven't any," Dave said. "Even if they had, we couldn't get it without money. I know that breed. He hates strange white men. He wouldn't let us have a dried fish on credit."

They made camp near the Cree. After a slim supper Fred renewed his insistence.

"I'm not going to starve again," Fred said. "You can't make me. You're crazy, going on when there's help a day away."

"Starving people can't feed us," Dave said.

Alec was sitting up, listening.

"How do I know you gave me the truth of what that Indian said?" Fred demanded. "Whoever heard of an H. B.C. post without grub? You've got no right to decide everything."

"What you got against it, Dave?" Alec asked.

"It's seventy-five miles out of the way," Dave said. "Half the distance to steel. If they had supplies, we couldn't get any from that breed without cash."

"It might be worth trying," Alec said.

"If it was a post, sure," Dave said. "As a white man would do anything for us. But that breed is scared of making a mistake. It's a small outpost and the company is thinking of closing it. Now, with starving hunters and their families around, we can't count on a thing from him."

"That's how you tell it," Fred said.

He jumped to his feet and leaned over Dave.

"I'm going to that outpost tomorrow whether you like it or not," he said. "I'm through taking orders from you. I'll take the two best dogs."

"You don't take one of my dogs," Dave said.

Dave got to his feet. He didn't like the look in Fred's eyes. The man was not wholly angry. Fred was only whipping himself into a rage.

"It sounds like a good idea," Alec said. "I could rest here. Fred could make it there and back in two days."

Dave looked at Alec.

"Fred wouldn't come back," Dave said.

"What you mean, I wouldn't?" Fred demanded savagely.

Dave drew a big breath. Suddenly he knew that the showdown had come.

"With three pardners a majority rules," Alec said. "You always get Fred wrong."

"I don't get Fred wrong," Dave said. "He's yellow and he cracks under pressure. He's cracked now. He wants to give us the slip."

Fred had started forward, but that last sentence stopped him.

"Fred took a shot at me for only half a rabbit," Dave said. "If he'd kill me for that, he'd skip now and let us starve."

"He fell over a windfall," Alec said.

"That's what he told you," Dave said. "My word wasn't any good with you then, so I kept still. Maybe it isn't any good now. But Fred aimed the rifle and he pulled the trigger."

"I don't believe it," Alec said.

"He's lying!" Fred exclaimed. "He's the one that wants to give us the slip. He wants to get us on a little farther and then duck out some night with his dogs and leave us to starve. Then he'll get all those claims. I've seen it coming all along."

Dave found he did not resent the charge. He suddenly knew what was back of Fred's actions. That reference to skipping out had stopped Fred. Dave saw for the first time what those snowshoe prints on the lot lines of the claims had meant.

"I'll tell you why I'm not letting Fred

leave us," Dave said to Alec. "He altered the notices on our best claims, those northwest lots. He wants to get out and record them."

Dave's dogs had gathered around him, lifting their ears at each shading of his voice. They had come with Fred's first angry statement, and when Fred had started toward Dave their lips had lifted from white teeth. Now, at Fred's first step, a deep growl arose. Jeff crouched, ready to spring.

"Go back, Fred," Dave said, "or they'll tear you to pieces. And I couldn't stop them."

Fred retreated. Alec was swaying on his seat. Dave caught him, lifted him into bed and wrapped him in the thick down robe.

"Don't worry," Dave said. "We'll get you out."

"You've got Fred wrong," Alec said.

Dave went to bed. Suddenly he was very tired. His dogs snuggled against him. Their ears were cocked and they watched Fred with bright eyes. Dave heard them whine in the night but his exhaustion was great. Toward morning the cold wakened him. When he built up the fire, flames revealed an empty bow bed. Dave searched quickly. Fred was gone. He had taken his robe, snowshoes and a rifle.



DAVE'S only thought was to follow. He took a rifle and ran down to the lake. It lay empty under a low fading moon, but on the ice a branch blocked the trail. Dave walked to it and found a message printed in the snow in letters two feet high.

"BACK IN 2 DAYS WAIT."

It was four o'clock. Fred probably had started before midnight. Dave returned to camp and found Alec awake. He told what had happened.

"Fred will be back," Alec said. "In two days, like his note said."

"We'd rot waiting for him," Dave said. "We'll start on south now."

Alec did not speak while Dave cooked breakfast. He did not sit up for the

meal. Pain had creased his face deeply, but now the stiff muscles sagged. Dave lifted his head and fed him broth with a spoon.

"Don't worry," Dave said. "I'll get you out. That's all that counts."

"Fred will be back," Alec said. "I know the stock too well. You've got to wait."

The old man was in bad shape. Dave thought a rest might help. The dogs needed a rest, too. They needed a chance to let their sore feet heal.

"All right," Dave said. "I'll wait two days."

Dave went to the Indian's camp. The man was boiling a fish for breakfast. He refused to help take Alec out. His family was without food, waiting for him to bring it from the outpost. And he had none. His only hope lay in getting caribou. He had seen tracks crossing to the south a few days before.

Dave returned to camp, chained the dogs and started south. He turned west after a few miles, hoping to cut the trail of the caribou the Indian had seen. He returned after dark without finding a track. But he had shot three rabbits.

"We're getting out of the seven-year area," he told Alec. "I'm going south tomorrow with snare wire. If I don't do anything else, I'll have a trail broken."

"You need rest, boy," Alec said.

"Plenty of time after I get out," Dave said.

He cooked supper and made Alec comfortable for the night.

"You don't think Fred will come back," Alec said.

"No," Dave said.

"You don't know the stock. I do. Fred will come."

Dave departed long before dawn the next morning. He traveled fifteen miles, found rabbit tracks in a big alder swamp, set snares on the runways and walked through. When he returned he had four big snowshoe hares. He hung them in a tree, reset the snares and returned to camp. As he approached, long after dark, he saw a fire burning. Dave knew Alec could not build a fire. It could only mean that Fred Sedley had returned.

But a strange Cree Indian was sitting before the fire.

"He just came from the outpost," Alec said.

Alec's voice was weak. All the fight seemed to have gone out of the old prospector.

"I used to know Cree pretty good," Alec said, "but I'm rusty. Ask him what he told me."

Dave spoke to the Indian. He learned Fred had reached the outpost the previous noon. He had bought three dogs of a starving Indian, paid fifty cents each for some fish and started at once for the railroad.

Alec did not open his eyes when Dave repeated this.

"Yes," Alec said. "I got that much. But how could he pay for dogs and fish?"

"This *nitchie* says Fred had money in an oilskin bag," Dave interpreted. "He didn't spend it all, either."

"But if Fred had money he'd have told us when we needed it so bad," Alec said.

"The Indian says he had plenty," Dave said.

The next morning the weary journey into the south was resumed. Until mid-forenoon Dave made swift progress. The trail was broken, frozen hard. The dogs, bodies rested and feet healing after two days of idleness, responded with yips and lifted tails, with digging paws and straining muscles.

Dave found six rabbits in the snares and lashed them and the other four to the lead toboggan. It meant good meals for the dogs for two extra days, and two days could easily make the difference between life and death.

"We'll get out now," Dave said when he went back to Alec's toboggan, but Alec did not open his eyes or reply.



THE heavy work began now. Dave was alone in breaking trail in deep snow. He had no relief, no chance to drop back and let another take the burden, but the dogs liked it. They liked being alone with Dave, working only with him.

Jake, the leader, crossed his forefeet

with each step to avoid treading on the snowshoe tails and tripping Dave. This required Jake's constant attention in the deep, fluffy snow. Jake would have been deeply humiliated had he thrown Dave off stride only once, but he made the effort so as to be near his master and to demonstrate his utter willingness.

The spirit of the entire team was different now. Fred was a stranger, and even before he struck Jeff the dogs had withheld acceptance of him. Those blows had not surprised them, had only proved what dogs can feel to be true. Working alone with Dave, their emotional fervor was centered, was undisturbed by those psychic currents that touch dogs so quickly.

The dogs even understood that Alec was injured. They had whined and mourned when he was first brought from the shaft, and each animal had approached to sniff the unconscious man and touch his face with a tongue. There was even rivalry as to which should sleep close to the prospector at night, and Jack, whose unrestrained devotion was great enough to include Alec as well as Dave, had gone to Alec's toboggan instead of the other one morning and planted himself before the singletree. Dave had grinned and hooked him on.

It helped vastly, this willingness and devotion, and there was more than that. The dogs understood each task as well as did Dave. In rough going on portages they watched him every moment. When the hood of Alec's toboggan had been lifted clear of an obstruction they lunged against the collars without command.

But all this cooperation and loyal effort could not stretch a day's journey past Dave's ability to break trail. He had all that to do now instead of half of it. Hour after hour, from long before dawn until long after night had come, he kept plowing on in the lead, lifting his webs, thrusting them forward, packing down snow. The labor was cruel, so heavy that thigh muscles quivered uncontrollably and Dave gritted his teeth against the torture.

For two days Alec De Witt did not speak. He lay all day in the cariole, with eyes closed, with pain twitching

his face. One night he watched Dave stagger through camp tasks.

"Take it easy, boy," Alec said.

"I'm young," Dave said. "I can stand it. How you feel?"

"My back don't hurt near so much," Alec said. "That rest helped a lot."

"You won't need a doctor by the time I get you out," Dave said.

He knew what Alec meant and did not speak of Fred. Thirty years had crumpled for the old prospector. He had been able to fight until Fred left.

"Did Fred take a shot at you that time?" Alec asked.

"Yes," Dave said.

"Why?" Alec asked.

"He said he wanted the rabbit. All of it."

"But the robe was on your back," Alec said.

"I took it off. I threw it at him. The bullet hit it. Then I blacked his eye. I was too weak to do any more."

Alec was silent for a while.

"Mark Sedley wasn't like that," Alec said at last. "I could trust Mark."

"Fred wasn't all bad," Dave said quickly. "Going down in the shaft after you like he did, getting you out—that took nerve."

"It didn't prove anything," Alec said. "When a man's excited he can do fine things. But give him time to think and likely he won't. Bringing death an inch closer every hour, having to look it in the eye every day—it just ain't natural for a man to do what's right."

"Like you told me," Dave said. "You don't know and you can't tell what any man will do when he's up against slow death. You don't even know what you'll do yourself."

Alec was silent a long while.

"You stand starvin' pretty well yourself, Dave," Alec said at last. "You and Mark Sedley."

They went on, Dave breaking trail, making camp, caring for Alec and the dogs, cooking the scanty meals. Not much meat was left, not much fish. Dave knew there was not enough.

"We'll hit the Brule today and know if Fred is ahead of us," Dave said one morning.

"Fred had a day and a half start," Alec said.

"But he'll be breaking trail for us."

"You'll catch him, pardner," Alec said.

"It just wouldn't be right now, a man like him getting our claims."

"It isn't just claims," Dave said. "But with you hurt, his having that money, never telling us, I got to beat him to steel."



AT NOON they struck Brule River, up which Fred would come. Fred had come and gone on. Dave saw the trench ahead, but when he reached it he saw that someone else had passed before Fred, that Fred had a hard path and could travel rapidly.

"Got two or three days' start," Dave reported bitterly.

They went on, far more swiftly now. The dogs were released from the deadly drag of snow-clogged toboggans, Dave from the weight of excessive labor. He ran, shuffling his webs along the hard trail. The dogs trotted behind him.

That afternoon they found where Fred had camped and knew he was two days ahead. But Dave found other things on the trail. Red splotches told frequently of lame dogs. Disturbed snow and hairs beside the trench revealed how Fred had come back and beaten his animals when pain compelled them to halt and lick their bleeding feet.

"We're gaining," Dave said in camp that night.

"You can't make up two days in a hundred miles," Alec said. "You and the dogs can't stand it. How's the grub?"

"Lot of fish left. Some meat and half a side of bacon. Plenty."

Alec sat up for supper. His face bore the marks of endless agony, but he could move more easily, even stood up for a moment. He did that to get a look at the supplies, to make sure Dave had lied.

They passed another of Fred's camping places the next noon and knew they had not gained much. Fred was driving his dogs relentlessly, beating them more often. But that did not give Dave hope. His legs were trembling and his lungs sore from cold air gulped through

his mouth. The dogs' tails dragged. They responded eagerly to his pats, but sank to the snow every time they stopped. Some were too weary to lick their bleeding feet. A quarter of a fish had been their nightly ration. Dave could feel ribs hidden only by skin and hair.

"Nothing's worth killing yourself for, boy," Alec said. "Go into camp. There'll be rabbits here. Get rested and fed up."

Dave did not answer that. He was staring toward the northeast, holding his hot, frost-sore face to the breeze.

"Fred's afraid," he said. "It saps a man. I saw it in him last fall. He's stronger and tougher than I am, but a scared man tires fast."

"I'll be lugging you if you don't quit," Alec said.

"It's going to snow," Dave said. "Snow hard. With a wind. He'll have to break trail."

"That won't help you. Trail will fill behind him."

"Not where I'm going," Dave said. "It'll be a blizzard, Alec. Sticking to the river and small lakes, Fred will have heavy going. This afternoon I swing east to Osnagami. Watch us travel."

Snow began falling soon afterward and wind drove it in level stinging lines. The dogs' hair was ruffled and flakes filled their coats. Dave ran steadily, gaining all the distance he could while the trail was hard. After an hour the dogs behind him stopped, pulled to one side and whined. Dave went back to find blood and hair beside the trench. Snow down to the ice was soaked red. The frozen mass showed marks of fangs.

"Fred killed a dog," Dave reported to Alec. "To feed the others and himself."

Dave turned aside soon afterward, up a smaller stream, began again the heavy work of breaking trail. The dogs did not understand and watched him anxiously. They had to pull hard now, and they had little strength for the work.

The storm increased in fury. Before dark Dave reached Osnogami Lake. The snow was blinding. Not only did it fall

from above but it was blown up from the ice. Dave crossed the narrow upper end, quartering into the wind, then turned before it, traveled on into the night. Long afterward, while he staggered before the gale, blinded by the smothering white darkness, he ran into an island. He felt his way around and made camp on the lee side.

Dave counted the fish when he had the fire going. There were ten, and he gave one to each dog. He ate the last of the few beans, half the bacon, and put Alec's meat aside.

After supper he hung the big toboggan in the trees.

"Yours can carry all we have," he said. "And we'll travel now."



TWO hours before dawn they were away, the wind at their backs the only guide. Five dogs were in one team now and responded to the sense of solidarity, to the urge that drove Dave Marsh. They had only Alec's wasted body, the robes and a few pounds of food to haul.

The temperature was not low, but the bitter wind stung cheeks and eyes. For twelve hours that gale had been sweeping the ice and packing hard drifts. Dave did not wear his snowshoes and the toboggan scarcely left mark.

Lightened, both dogs and man ran swiftly. Helped on by the wind, they seldom rested. They were so weary that they staggered when the blizzard screamed, but they did not stop until the fifty mile length of Osnagami was behind them. That night the dogs had the last of the fish, Dave the final piece of bacon.

"Next time I eat, it'll be off a table," Dave said.

Their swift progress had ended. Before dawn Dave was breaking trail in heavy snow in the forest. At noon, staggering from weariness, he came out on the last lake, joined the trail he had deserted before the storm.

The prints of Fred Sedley's snowshoes and toboggan were sharply fresh before him.

Dave stopped and walked back to the

toboggan. Alec was sitting up and could see Fred's trail.

"How'd you know Fred changed those claim notices?" Alec asked.

Dave told about the tracks he had found on the lot lines.

"It won't do him any good," Alec said. "We've got the grubstake agreement. It's our word against his. And we're going to get out."

"His kind can't keep us from making it," Dave said. "And he isn't going to beat me to steel."

Dave started on in the trail Fred had broken. He could travel three times as fast. When he turned into a long arm of the lake, with the railroad only a few miles away, he saw Fred Sedley and one dog a half mile ahead.

After a few moments Fred looked back. He stooped and took a rifle from the little toboggan. He shook off the cover and examined the weapon, and then he started back.

Dave got his own rifle and pumped a cartridge into the barrel.

"This whole thing is my fault," Alec said.

Dave grinned at Alec. "Anyhow, it's going to be settled quick," he said.

Dave walked twenty yards to the side of the trail and waited. Fred was coming steadily. His head was down. He carried his rifle across his waist. As he came nearer, Dave could see that his legs trembled, that he could barely lift his snowshoes.

Fred looked up. The dogs lay in the trail. Alec sat in the cariole. Dave stood off to one side. But Fred did not seem to see them. He staggered on.

The dogs got up when they recognized Fred. Dave could hear them growl. Fred turned off, toward Dave. He did not lift his weapon. When abreast of the lead dog he stopped and stared at the team a moment, at the lifting ruffs and the bared teeth, at the hate the dogs had for him.

Then Fred started on. His legs lifted the webs in the deep snow with difficulty. He did not raise his head when he passed Alec De Witt nor did he look toward Dave. When the team and the two men lay behind him he staggered back to the trail and went on into the north. He never looked back.

Dave walked to the toboggan. All the fierce determination was gone from his face. He stared after Fred.

"I've got to get him," Dave said.

"Fred don't want you to," Alec said. "I saw his face."

"He'll starve. Freeze to death."

"Maybe so," Alec said. "He chose the beginning. He's got a right to choose the end."

Dave waited a long while, until Fred Sedley had disappeared around a point and on into the empty north. Dave started on toward the railroad. He was glad when he came to the end of Fred's trail and there was only clean fresh snow before him.

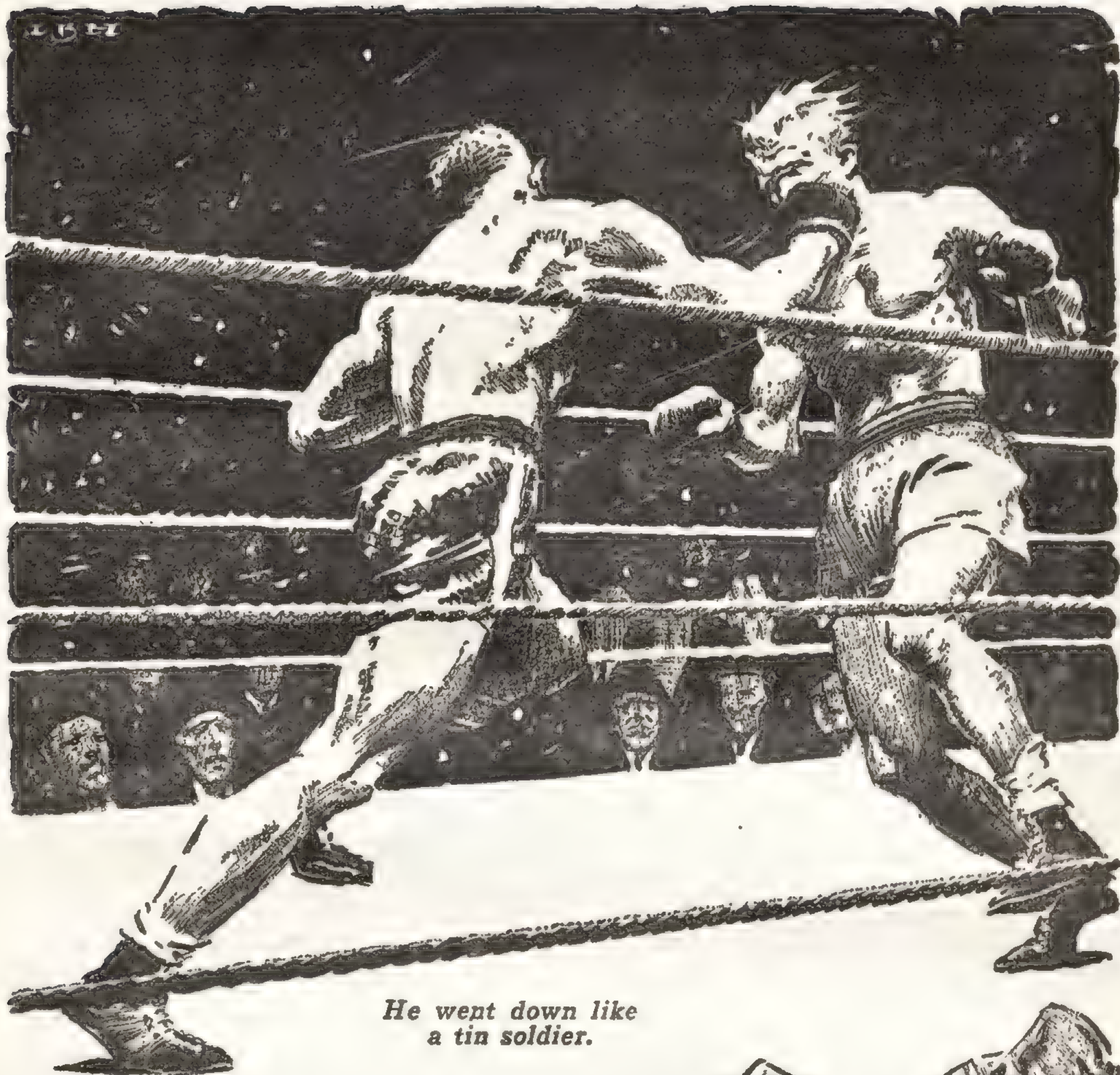
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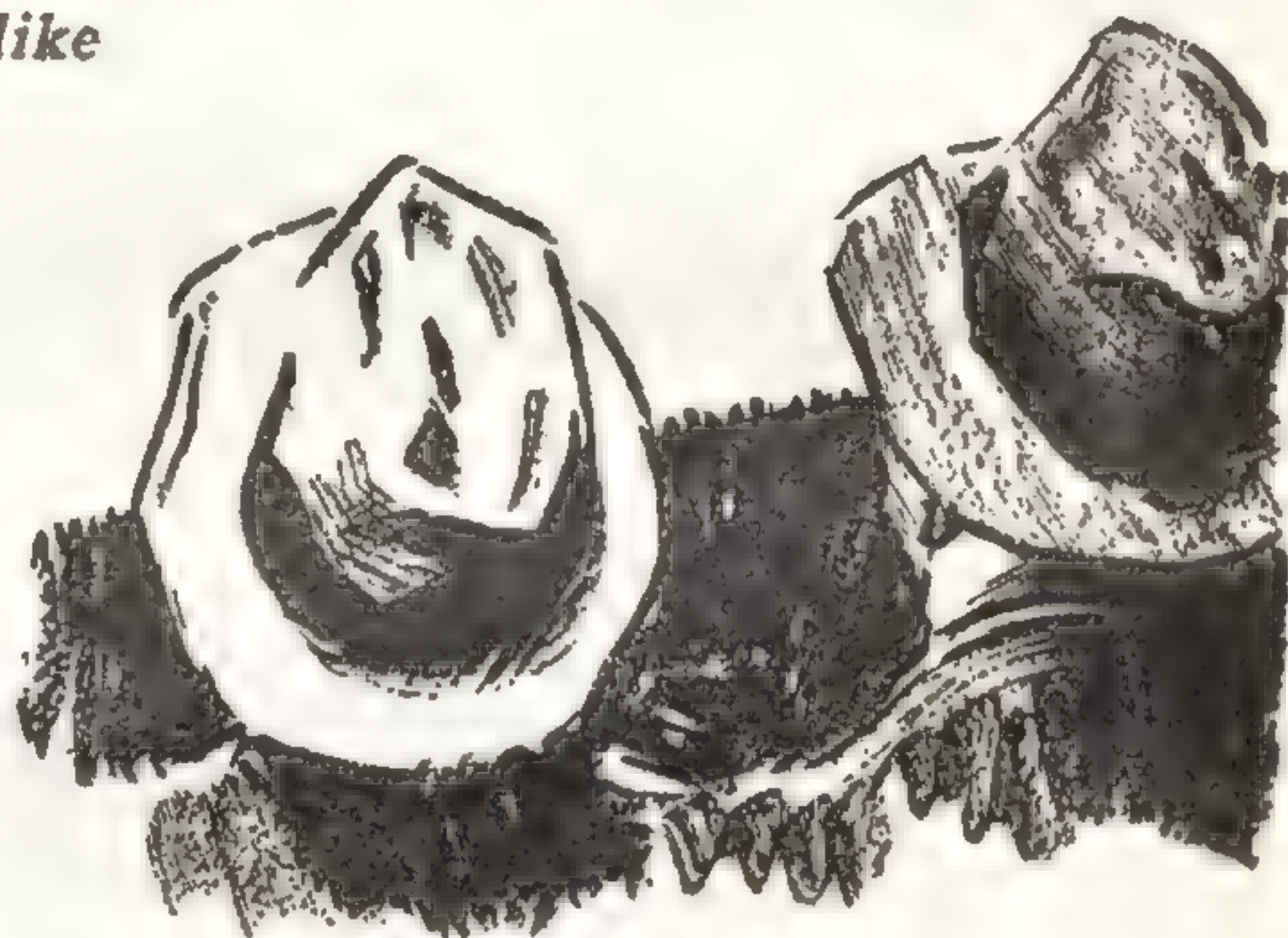


*He went down like
a tin soldier.*

STAND UP AND FIGHT

A novelette

By WILLIAM E. BARRETT



JIMMY FLINT was a good kid and I hated to clip him, but the sports writers were watching me and it was my last workout before the fight with Slapper Cody. The odds were three to one on Slapper—and I was champion of the world. Was I flattered?

Champion of the world! My breath was burning me inside of my lungs and there was a hard, aching ridge behind my stomach muscles. I'd gone five rounds

with two palooka sparring partners named Luke and I was in the middle of the second against Jimmy. He was flicking me with a left hand that wouldn't have looked fast to me once and he was thudding a right into my body every once in a while.

The sports writers were watching me and I couldn't take that right to the body any more. I looked at Jimmy Flint over the gloves and he looked like a kid

out of grammar school. There was sweat on the fuzz of his upper lip and a hard, squinting intentness in his eyes. A swell kid, Jimmy, and he was giving me what I paid for, a good stiff workout. But I couldn't take what I'd bought. In another round he'd be making a sucker out of me.

He shot the left again and I sagged away from it, my feet anchored. His glove grazed my shoulder and I hooked him with both hands to the body. His eyes went wide and he threw a half-hearted left hook as he went back. I was inside it with my right and straight to the button—and they don't walk away from me when I land like that.

The kid was cold before he hit the deck and I strutted to my corner. You learn to strut when you're champion of the world. It's good theatre and the people in the pews expect it. I could hear the buzz of conversation around the ring, but I couldn't make out the words. There was blood roaring in my brain and my lungs still blazed. I could feel a muscle jerk like a pulse in my left leg. I didn't risk looking at anybody in particular. As long as no one saw my eyes, no one would guess how tired I was or how mean I felt. My face wouldn't give me away. You train your face to hide things when you work inside the ropes for a living.

Baldy Miske, my handler, was throwing a robe over my shoulders and one of the palookas was helping Jimmy Flint to his feet. The kid was shaking his head and there was a sort of glaze over his eyes. I went back across the ring with the robe flapping and put my gloved hand on his arm.

"Sorry, kid," I told him. "How's it?"

He shook his head again and some of the daze left his eyes. He managed a smile.

"Okay, champ," he said, "You're in the pink. A cinch over Cody."

He spoke a little thickly, but it wasn't just a speech. I felt mean, plenty mean. The kid hadn't expected the heavy artillery. We were slated to go the three. But the sports writers were out front and I was champion of the world—and the odds were three to one on the other guy.

Frankie Dell, my manager, was in the ring and leading me out of it. He was

lean and wrinkled and his eyes had a lot of wisdom behind them that guys like me never get. He knew all of the answers in the boxing racket and he'd known them all before he ever saw me. He'd handled one world champion before me and he'd handled some bums. He learned something from each of them and I got the benefit of what he'd learned. We got along.

"Ixnay on chatter to the press, champ," he said. "I'll handle them."

I nodded without looking at him. I wondered if he knew why I chilled Jimmy Flint and I was afraid that he did. The sports writers were impressed. I could hear some of the remarks now.

". . . still got the old sock, all right," one of them was saying, "and the kid was on top of him like Slapper will be."

The words cheered me up, and I was strutting when I went down the duckboards from the open-air ring toward the steel-fenced enclosure where I was supposed to hold secret workouts in the gym—strutting just like I'd really chilled Slapper Cody instead of Jimmy Flint.

Sanger of the *Journal* got on the other side of me from Frankie Dell.

"There's a whisper, champ, that you're going to dive," he said, "How about it?"

I broke step. The question made me sore. "I'm going to—"

I was going to say that I'd break Slapper Cody in two and heave him into Sanger's typewriter or some fool thing like that, but Frankie Dell didn't let me make cracks like that to the press. He cut in fast ahead of me.

"Nuts, Sanger," he said. "If you're looking for dirt, go where they have it."



SANGER kept moving with us. He was short and dark and he had a laugh like a guy that knows everything. "I wasn't talking about dirt. I was talking about water. About going in the tank."

Frankie slapped me on the back and sent me ahead. He planted himself in front of Sanger.

"That kid doesn't throw fights," he growled, "and he's on the short end of the betting where he doesn't belong. This fixed fight business makes me sick. I hear it every fight, and—"

He was still pouring it to the sports writer when I stepped through the gate, clicked it behind me and circled the big square barn that we'd made a gymnasium. There was a ring in here too, but I never used it unless it rained. As I came around the corner to the back of the gym, I stopped.

There was a big blue car parked a few feet from the entrance, a sporty job with the top down. A girl with golden hair was lolling beside the empty driver's seat with one silk-stockinged leg resting against the dash. She turned her head when she saw me and took her leg down—but not fast.

"Hello, champ," she said.

Seeing her suddenly like that with the sunlight in her hair, I couldn't even think of a good comeback to "Hello". She was Greta Gallerie, and she always affected me like that. She was small and fluffy and curved, with very white teeth and a soft, throaty laugh. I always had the feeling that if I talked loud or moved quick, she would break like a China doll—and if that doesn't make sense, well maybe it isn't sense. But her world and mine was different.

She was smiling at me and it wasn't all friendly. Some of it was amusement.

"Same old impetuous playboy, aren't you?" she said. I shook my head.

"I'm in training," I told her.

It wasn't a bright crack, but I had to say something. I was practically running when I said it and I didn't even see how she took it. What was the use? Greta Gallerie had been starred in musical comedy and on the radio. She knew smooth people and she had had enough of me to know that I wasn't smooth.

I had met her on the night that I won the middleweight championship, and a man is always hot the night he takes a title. People kind of gave me a play and I was at a party. Greta made a fuss over me, but I guess I fumbled the ball.

"You don't know much about women, do you?" she asked me, then—and I didn't. After that, she was always amused when she saw me and I never felt comfortable where she was. I heard later that she had given a play to other pugs and maybe they knew the answers that I never learned. I don't know.

Inside the gym it was big and bleak and empty-looking, but when I closed the door behind me, Cash Buhlman came down the iron stairway from the gallery. He had a pair of binoculars in his hand and he half-waved toward the gallery window.

"I was watching you work with the punk, McMillen," he said, "and you worked nice. That right that you hit him with was a beauty."

I grunted. I was feeling mean again. Cash Buhlman was a big league gambler and he knew a lot about fights and fighters, but he didn't know what I knew—that my right looked good out there because I hit a kid that didn't expect me to come out with the shooting mittens on, a kid that was scheduled to give me a three-round workout and not to fall in two.

"I'm in the pink, Cash," I told him.

It was the old baloney that a fighter always cuts before a big fight. I was lousy and my timing was off and my legs were always tired and—well, page me when you hear a champion admit it. Cash Buhlman was nodding his head.

"The smart money will put you in the ring at even money," he said, "in spite of those last two fights of yours. You're a different man when your title is on the line than when you're waltzing one of those over-the-weight things."

"Sure," I said.

I wasn't sure. On my last two outs, with no title at stake, I'd been damned near murdered by club fighters. I'd come out of the ring alive because I knew a lot—knowing a lot against a real contender like Cody was something else. He knew stuff himself. Cash Buhlman walked across the room and snapped the catch on the gym door. He looked at me kind of funny when he turned around.

"You've had your fun, McMillen," he said, "and I'd like to take some of this wise money. How about putting ten grand in your pocket and letting Slapper Cody have the fight?"



THE gym seemed awfully quiet after Cash stopped talking, and I just stood there looking at him. I was feeling the way I felt around Greta Gallerie,

who was waiting for Cash in his car outside. Cash Buhlman was tall and slender in a strong kind of way. He had the gambler face—not exactly a poker face, like most people think, but friendly without revealing what was behind the friendliness. His jaw was long and thin and his lips were tight; his eyes had a habit of retreating behind the puckers that he carried beneath his lids. He wore expensive suits and they were tailored out of real weaves, not horse blankets, if you get what I mean. He had class like Greta had—not the kind of class you're born with, maybe, but class.

I wanted to tell him to go to hell or maybe poke him one for luck, but I just shook my head.

"I've always levelled, Cash," I told him.

He turned a cigarette around in his long fingers without lighting it.

"Fighters don't last forever, McMillen," he said, "and ten grand would help a lot on the way out. I'll make it fifteen."

He was squinting at me through the slits where his eyes puckered up. There was no movie motions about him, no guilty looks or tough talk. I felt like I did on the night when Greta said, "Let's ditch this dumb party, champ, and go solo." All I could think of to say then was, "I can't because it's sort of my party." That was the night she decided I didn't know about women. Maybe I didn't know about gamblers, either.

"Even if you make it twenty, Cash," I said, "it's no dice. All I know how to do in a ring is fight."

"You might lose anyway. This way a fifteen grand bonus is velvet."

"Not to me."

We looked at each other. In the movies I'd have been sore and insulted. Somehow, I wasn't, not after the first few seconds. There are fighters who will do business, and Cash was a gambler who likes the percentage. The only way he could be sure about me was ask, and he'd made me a good offer. He shrugged his shoulders, lighted his cigarette and turned to the door.

"Okay, McMillen," he said. "If you change your mind, give me a buzz. If the sucker money is high, I might make a better offer."

I didn't answer that. I wasn't expected to. Cash Buhlman opened the door and Baldy Miske, my handler, came in with Jimmy Flint. And they didn't start getting ideas just because they saw a gambler going out.

Gamblers look fighters over and talk to them before fights, even when there isn't any fix. That's business. Me, I headed for the shower. A long time later, Frankie Dell came in.

I was sitting on a stool and pulling my socks on. The shower hadn't turned off all the way and there was a dripping sound that echoed in the gym; a sort of racing, slapping drip-drip-drip. It got my mind going on Slapper Cody.

Slapper had got his name out of the fact that he punched like that water dripped—steadily, relentlessly, all the time. He was a busy fighter and the sports crowd said he was tireless. He had a string of eleven straight knockouts. I tugged my socks on slowly.

I had been fighting nine years, seven of those years before I won the championship. There was something gone out of me that I used to have, and I couldn't train it back in. The fast going tired me and the heavy ones downstairs made me sick and my legs had slowed just enough to throw my timing off. I was still a good bet against a slugger or a slow guy bigger than myself, but a boy like Slapper Cody could kill me off with the pace without throwing a punch.

"And I'd kissed away fifteen grand!"

Frankie Dell was walking around. He stopped suddenly in front of me. Frankie's face was a lot like Cash Buhlman's, although older. It was friendly in the same way and wise, and it never gave away what Frankie Dell was thinking. Frankie didn't have class, though; he was just a fight manager who knew his way around.

"Buhlman told me that he talked to you, kid," he said. I nodded. There was no shock to that. Cash was known as a square shooter, and it isn't ethical to put the fix on a fighter without cutting his manager in on the deal. Frankie rubbed his hand along his jaw.

"I know what you told him," he said slowly, "but what have you been thinking?"

For just a moment I looked up at him—and I knew then that he was wise to why I knocked Jimmy Flint for a loop. He knew that I didn't have a champion's stuff any more. I put my head down and started tying my shoes.

"I've been thinking that I could use fifteen grand," I said, "but I haven't been thinking of getting it that way."

We'd been together a long time, me and Frankie Dell. We didn't need to get out a pencil and paper and draw diagrams for each other. He sat there rubbing his jaw for a minute and then he got up.

"Okay," he said.

He wasn't telling me that I was smart or that I was honest or a swell guy or a fool; he was just telling me to play it as I saw it. He got up and walked away and I finished my business with the shoes. For some reason or another, the main thing in my mind as I pulled on my shirt was Greta Gallerie.

I was wondering why she even wasted the time to kid pugs like me when she could run around with people who had the class of Cash Buhlman.

The water was still dropping from the shower fixture in a steady, relentless drip-drip-drip. . .

CHAPTER II

KNOCKOUT



ED PIPER, Slapper Cody's manager, came around to inspect my bandages on the night of the fight. The place was over-run with people like it usually is; ex-champs and muggs that know just what the answers are and newspaper guys who didn't get enough at the weighing in, officials and pests and everybody. Piper had business there and he came in like he meant business, but he packed a grouch with him.

He was a short, stocky man with wide shoulders and straight black hair. He'd been a welterweight pug once upon a time, but lads like Jack Britton and Ted Lewis made him look pretty bad and he never amounted to much. He was a pretty good manager, though, and Slapper Cody had put him in the bucks. He

came over to me without saying a word and started feeling my bandages. I threw the usual stale crack at him.

"No horse-shoes in 'em, Ed. Not to-night."

He grunts.

"Nah," he says.

He looks at me like he hates my guts. There's none of the usual jolly stuff that a manager feeds to the fighter his boy is going to tangle with—no ribbing, no bragging, nothing. He just examines the bandages, growls a bit at Frankie Dell and hangs around a few minutes. It kind of gets under my skin.

After all, I'm champion of the world and a champion has some rights. Most people are respectful on the night a champion fights. Why not?

But I don't think of Ed Piper long, nor about anybody else. It's all kind of blurred in my mind—the people coming and going and the wise cracks and the good wishes and the smell of people and liniment and all of the stuff that the handlers drag around with them. The roar of the crowd as the prelim boys slug it out come up to the dressing room like something not quite real. Then it all hushes down as the crowd in the room thins out and a soft-spoken little guy comes to the door.

"All ready, champ," he says, and we're on our way.

If you've ever walked down a long ball park aisle through twenty-five thousand people, with a ring waiting for you at the end of the aisle, then you know how it feels; if you haven't, I can't tell you. Like I said, it's all kind of blurred in my mind, with details running together. In a few minutes I am going to be laying my title on the line with the best man I've ever fought.

Scared? Sure. And a little sick with excitement, but anxious to get it over with—and dead calm outside, like you're trained to be. I've got a towel crossed over my shoulders and chest under my blue robe and Frankie Dell has his hand on my shoulder. The noise of the crowd is like a wave, a rising and falling kind of noise. Then I am in the ring, and the lights are blazing white around me as I shuffle my feet in the resin and pose for a few shots and size up the other corner.

I've got Frankie Dell and Baldy Miske and Jimmy Flint in my corner. Across the way, Slapper Cody is grinding the heels of his gloves together and staring at me. He's a rangy lad with a lot of shoulders and chest, thin legs and a nervous way of crouching, even in repose. His face is broad and high-boned; in spite of the name, he's a Polack out of the steel mills. Ed Piper is whispering to him and his other two handlers are fussing around.

Frankie Dell leans over my shoulder.

"You're going in at even money," he said, "They've been backing you heavy. Take what this bozo's got and don't box with him. Slap him out with your right. Keep trying till you connect. . . ."

I nodded. The old daze was settling down on me. It is always that way just before the gong. The announcer did his stuff and I took my bow and it was all like doing something in a dream. Back in my brain, though, the thoughts were whirling around.

I'd been three to one and I was going in at even money. I'd fooled them with that last workout. Some of the sports writers went right off the end for me. They liked the way I chilled Jimmy Flint, and they said that I'd found the answer to Slapper Cody's attack. Which just went to prove how much sports writers know about it.

The referee called us out in the middle and said the same old stuff and Slapper Cody shuffled his feet a little; then we touched gloves. There was hot hatred in Slapper's eyes. I didn't savvy that, because I'd never even seen the boy fight. I've never done anything to him except give him a crack at one of the best titles in the game. I turned back to my corner. That's the most terrible moment in the business—walking back from the middle and listening to the house get quiet.

How quiet it gets! All the roar seems to die out of that black mass behind the lights, and you can feel your nerves marching up your body until they push at the roots of your hair from under your scalp. I had walked that walk many times and I walked it again for Cody.

My handlers had faded out of the ring, and the corner seemed bare and empty. I was all alone in the ring with a job that

nobody could help me do. Very slowly I turned around and squinted across the ring through the blaze of white light. Slapper Cody was crouching as he turned.

The bell rang.



CODY came across the ring like a sprinter. He shifted just a little as he reached me and his left snapped out. I took it smack in the mouth—and I took two more quick lefts right after it. When I hooked to his body he wasn't there, but he was right back behind his left and he put two rights into my body just above the belt.

The roar of the crowd just swelled out.

I don't know exactly what I did after that, but he was on top of me every second and he kept pitching. I couldn't set myself and he was stabbing me off balance, hooking me to death and slipping my punches easily when he wasn't making me miss a mile.

The crowd noise was gone now, and so was every thought I ever had. I was a fighter and this was a fight. I was taking plenty, but after the first few punches I didn't feel any of them. Slapper Cody's style began to register—and I was studying it, while all the crowd could see was a steady stream of leather pouring into me. Cody wasn't fighting me like I was the champion of the world.

Every once in a while, he was shooting a straight left into my body.

The first three times he did it, I kept my right hand strapped down. The fourth time, I shot with it—right over that low lead to the unprotected jaw.

A raw club fighter with a shot like that should have been able to wash up and go home after he pulled the string on his right hand, but I knew when I let that punch go that I was off on accuracy and on timing. The leather grazed along Cody's chin and he rode with it.

Then he went down.

No knockdown in my entire career surprised me like that one. The referee jumped forward and waved me toward a neutral corner and I heard the crowd again. Slapper was lying half on his side and for three counts he didn't move. I stood in the corner and watched him and

wondered. I wondered if I'd just worried myself into thinking that I'd gone away back, wondered if maybe I'd hit him cleaner than I thought, wondered if he had a glass jaw. . . .

He was getting up.

At the count of eight, Cody was on one knee and the bell stopped the count there. I didn't look at him after it rang. I strutted a bit when I went to my own corner and I had stopped wondering. I felt swell. I always liked the second round of any fight. By that time the old tension is out of you and it's just another fight. I'd had my guy on the floor in the first and I was the champ. Let him worry.

Behind my corner in the row behind the press seats, I saw Greta Gallerie. She was with Cash Buhlman, and she stood up so that I could see her, waving her green hat in her hand and yelling, her blonde hair flashing in the bright light from the ring.

Frankie Dell and Baldy grabbed me and slapped me into my stool and I closed my eyes. Gosh, she was beautiful!

I was out fast at the bell and I missed Slapper with a left lead. He didn't counter and I stabbed at him again. He didn't seem to be moving fast, but I missed him with two more lefts and a right before I got close to him and worked him to the ropes. The crowd groaned when I missed the right. It must have looked pretty sour. I'd missed him by a foot.

In close I worked on him and he didn't like it, but infighting never looks good to the crowd. The crowd doesn't understand it. For a moment, just before the break, I was looking into Cody's eyes. They were dark eyes and very deep. There was a savage hatred in them like you seldom see in a professional's eyes. It wasn't just a fight to him; he didn't like me a bit.

I missed him with two shots on the break. He just let me miss; then he came into me fast and I simply ate leather. He threw it from all points of the compass and they were coming too fast for me to roll with them. I hit the ropes near my own corner and he was shooting hard with open sights. I covered, fell into a clinch and held. My lungs were

burning and my legs felt heavy. Slapper wrestled me back and then suddenly he seemed to stiffen. I had my shoulder up under his chin and he was looking off beyond my corner. For just a beat or two of the clock, he seemed to forget that he was in a fight. I felt the sudden slowing up. He wasn't trying to throw me off.

My left moved up across my chest and I pushed him away. He didn't get it at first. He was staring into the crowd. His attention wasn't on me, and he was a clay pigeon for the shooting. I gave it to him.

My right crossed to his jaw and he went down like a tin soldier. It was the payoff and I'd hit enough of them to know. Something down inside of me was laughing. That's what I'd done to Jimmy Flint. Doing it, I felt ashamed. I felt better now.

The referee was waving and I was starting to my corner—and the bell rang.

Nothing else in the world would have saved Slapper Cody. I had hit him right that time. The first one was not so good and I couldn't explain how he went down at all, but this was the McCoy. I was in my stool before Cody's handlers got him to his corner, and the roar of the crowd was music.

I was fighting the toughest lad they ever gave me and I had him in the bag. When I hit 'em, they caved. The water felt good on my body, but I wasn't even tired any more. I'd put Slapper away for keeps in the next round and I knew it.



THE crowd felt the same way about it; they were shouting for the kill when I charged out. Slapper Cody came out in that quick crouch of his and there was murder in his eyes. He'd recovered faster than he had any business to recover, and if he'd looked hatred at me before, it was deeper than ever now. He hated me too much to hit me.

He made me miss.

He feinted and shifted and slid around me like a ghost, and he made a monkey out of me. I was the world's middle-weight champion and he was showing the crowd that I was a has-been. He made it worse than that. He acted slap-

silly and dazed and threw only an occasional punch, just like he was still feeling all in from what I'd given him in the last round. Still, acting like that, he was too fast for me, too shifty. All the speed I had ever had was left in a hundred rings. The muscles in my legs were like creaky cables, and he knew it.

He made me chase him, and an old fighter looks bad when he's chasing. My lefts slid past him and the crowd groaned. My rights missed and missed. He was so good that he made my right look like a roundhouse—and when I caught up with him on the ropes, I had to clinch with him and take a rest. He wasn't even breathing hard, but he laid on me like a guy that is all in and I cursed at him.

"Make a fight of it, you ape!" I growled. He didn't even answer me. For a few seconds he laid in there hard and I worked on his body without a return shot.

Then he went flat-footed on the break and he hit me the hardest blow that I've ever felt in the ring. There probably weren't six people in the house saw that punch, because he was fast and he hadn't been punching at all. He just settled down and got his weight behind it and put his right hand into my solar plexus until I felt it in my spine.

The world had a quick dark curtain over it and he clipped me gently with a left to the chin that was maybe two degrees harder than a shove. I was already folding inside and I went down.

The cry of the crowd was a howl.

I could hear them and I knew what was happening, but I hit on my hands and knees, folding gently to the canvas. There was no knockout about it. I was fully conscious. I could hear and I could feel and I could think, but I was paralyzed.

The referee got up to five and I hadn't moved. There wasn't a bit of life in any part of my body. From every part of the hall I could hear them yelling "Fake" and "Dive." The ringside voices came to me hoarsely and abusively. Even the newspaper boys were yelling at me and I was trying to yell back, trying to move a finger or a toe or some single muscle. "Eight."

I felt life flowing back into my legs, and the pain in my stomach was terrible. I got one knee up under me and the wave of agony passed. The other leg came to life and I pulled it up. I pushed my head out of the dust with my left hand and the referee said "Nine."

I never concentrated as hard in my life. I pulled my quivering right leg under me and pushed. It seemed to take me forever to come upright and, in the meantime, the referee said "Ten."

There was a thunder of sound and the referee was waving to Slapper Cody and trying to say "Winner and new champion." He couldn't talk into the howl of the mob. I was on my feet and swaying a bit, but the effect of the punch was passing quickly. I turned toward Slapper's corner and Jimmy Flint grabbed me.

"To hell with it. Get out of here!" he yelled.

It was like a scene out of one of those lynch movies. The air was full of pop bottles and cushions and everything that could be thrown. People were surging up into the ring, and three cops battled their way to my side when a bunch of citizens started to sock me with things. The cry of "Fake!" and "Bum!" and "Sell-out!" filled the air and I couldn't see Frankie Dell. I saw Baldy briefly and he looked at me like I was a garden worm; then Jimmy was helping the cops fight a way down the aisle for me. My brain refused to accept it.

I had gone into the ring with the crowd cheering for me as champion of the world. I was going out with the same crowd trying to slaughter me. I'd turned down fifteen grand to throw this fight—and everybody thought I had thrown it.

It didn't add up and my stomach was very sick.



SOMEWHERE in the mob I lost Jimmie Flint. He'd cut the gloves off me getting out of the ring, and somebody tried to take the gloves away from him. Yellow little squirts who wouldn't have stood up to anybody were taking pokes at me as I rammed down the aisle with the cops, and some of the punches landed. The old mob spirit was flaming, and

people who never had cared whether fights were on the level or not were suddenly all steamed up about this one. The cops got me through, though, and shot me into the narrow little tunnel-like corridor that led to my dressing room. Slapper Cody's was in the opposite direction, and he'd already reached his. Almost everybody got through quicker than I did.

Half way to the room, I saw Cash Buhlman. He came hurriedly out of my dressing room and he didn't act like he even saw me. His face was white; it was the first time that I had ever seen him look mussed up or untidy. His hat was on a slant and his double-breasted coat was hanging wide open. He turned down the corridor away from me and toward the under-the-stands passageway that had been closed to the fans. I wanted to yell for him to stop so that I could ask him what he thought about the fight, but my stomach was knotted up and there wasn't a good yell in me. I threw my door open.

It wasn't a champion's dressing room any more. The newspaper crowd and the photographers were in Slapper Cody's, and the only fans that wanted to see me were tough citizens who had lost money on me. The bucket and the sponge and the towels were heaved into the middle of the room and that meant something, too.

Baldy Miske had got down before me and he hadn't waited for me. He hadn't given a damn whether I got a rub-down or not; he was through. I remembered that Baldy bet on all of my fights and I could understand how he felt, but I was getting hot with resentment. The crowd was bad enough, but when Baldy believed that I had sold out, that hurt. Frankie Dell wasn't around, either.

There was a noise in the corridor and Jimmy Flint came in. He was carrying one boxing glove and he tossed it on the rubbing table.

"Some mugg got the other one," he growled, "and I couldn't catch up with him. Those heels out there!"

I stood there with my stomach hurting like hell and my spirits lower than the bottom of the glass. Jimmy Flint started picking up the stuff and the door behind

us slammed open. Al Sanger of the *Journal* barged in with a fat photographer at his heels. Sanger was one of the few sports writers who drank on the job when there was a big fight—and he was plenty drunk. He rocked from his toes to his heels and looked at me.

"To hell with the champion prize-fighter," he said, "Me, I like mermaids and mermen. I like the divers and the seals and. . . ."

Jimmy Flint dropped the bucket he had just picked up and I took one step. Sanger waved to the photographer.

"Take McMillen's picture, Jack," he said, "I want it for my scrap book."

The photographer was nervous and he took a couple of steps closer to the door while he fumbled with his camera. Sanger was short and the only weight that he would ever have was starting to form around his middle, but he stepped right up to me and stuck his finger into my chest.

"You're the lousiest actor in America, McMillen," he said, "and I want you to know it. I want you to know that I'm glad I tipped my readers that the fight smelled funny. I want you to know that nobody but a dumb bum would throw roundhouse punches at a guy that was ready to fall down—and miss. Cody was so terrible that you knocked him down every time you hit him. You had to miss. But you didn't, by God, get away with falling down yourself from a high school slap in the puss. You're through. You smell to heaven, and—"

I picked him up off his feet and heaved him into his fat photographer. When they both went down, I grabbed the photographer's feet and shoved them out into the corridor. Jimmy Flint was right behind me and aching to fight.

"Get out in the hall, kid, and keep guys like that away," I told him. "I'll take care of myself."

He looked at me doubtfully for a moment and then he went. I peeled out of my trunks and slid under the shower.

I felt terrible. It wasn't the punching around: I had taken plenty worse than I got tonight; it was the feeling that I'd lost my championship and my friends at the same time. I didn't know what to do about it, and yet I had a feeling

that I ought to hurry with the toweling and do something.

Only partly dry, I padded across the room to the closet where my clothes were hung. I swung the door open and jumped back like a scared cat.

A wedged body fell toward me out of the open door and landed with a thud at my feet.



THAT thudding sound seemed to hang on the air for minutes; then I dropped slowly to one knee and turned over the body of Frankie Dell. He had been knifed right under the heart and his body was still warm. Whoever knifed him had taken the knife away, but the jolt of the fall had caused the blood to flow into a puddle under his body.

My heart felt like it did when Cody poured that right hand into me. There wasn't a beat in it. Frankie Dell had taken me out of the waterfront and the amateur fights. He'd built me up and he'd taught me things. He taught me to feel at home in hotel dining rooms and how to talk to nice people and how to spend money without throwing it away. When he had steered me into the championship, he treated me with respect. We didn't kid each other. He wasn't born with all the things he taught me and he didn't pretend that he was. He was a fight manager and sometimes he made deals. I knew that, too. I carried a green boy for ten rounds in Buffalo once to help a deal of his, but I never faked a fight or tossed one, and he never asked me to. Now he was dead at my feet.

I couldn't think of anything else for a few minutes except that he was dead; then I remembered Cash Buhlman rushing out of this dressing room and I could feel the sweat on my forehead.

Suppose Cash bet a lot of money on me when I wouldn't dive for the fifteen grand; figuring that showed confidence in myself and proved I was leveling! Suppose Cash lost a lot and figured that Frankie and I had crossed him up for some other gambler and burned his pants off deliberately! I shivered a little as I stood up.

If that's how it was, then maybe

Frankie Dell died with the belief that I had tossed the fight—and maybe Frankie was murdered because I was clumsy and fought such a bad fight that it looked fake.

Thinking isn't the best thing that I do, and I was getting myself into a panic. Frankie Dell had been murdered and the thing to do was get the cops. I started toward the door, and halfway across the room, I kicked the sponge that Jimmy had been about to pick up when danger broke in.

There was a pool of blood under the sponge.

I looked down at the blood and then across the room at Frankie. Here is where it happened and there he was. Somebody had knifed him and then slapped him into the closet so that he wouldn't be found very quick. That sponge had been set down on the blood to cover it up. And I thought of Baldy.

Baldy was just a rubber and a second and a handy guy to have around, and he had been behind me in most of my fights. He and Frankie growled at each other quite a lot, because their natures were different, but I couldn't figure any reason why Baldy would turn killer. Still—Baldy had given me one dirty look in the ring and walked out on me. He had been here in the dressing room, because the bucket and sponge were here. And the sponge was over the blood spot.

"I'll have to get the cops," I said. I didn't have any other idea. But when I got close to the door, I could hear people out in the corridor and Jimmie Flint cussing them out. He was threatening to slap somebody's ears down and there were a lot of people arguing. I stopped short.

I was naked as a jay bird and there was a mob howling for my blood and I had heaved a newspaper man out of the dressing room. All that was necessary to make my evening complete was for me to barge out and tell the world that I'd just discovered a murder and that I didn't do it.

Dumb as I am, I could see the whole picture. I had had the opportunity; as far as anyone knew. Nobody else had seen Cash Buhlman coming out of the dressing room. Nobody could back me



He'd been knifed right through the heart.

up on the claim that the room looked empty when I came in. I had a motive. Everybody would say that Frankie was sore about the "dive" and that I killed him in an argument. As for my character! That howling mob that saw the fight would never believe any more that I had any.

Something in my brain said, "You've gotta get away."



IT WAS like Slapper Cody throwing punches. I could see and feel danger to myself in every angle and in every step. My brain just refused to battle with a problem as tough as that, and I was

afraid to do the only logical thing that there is to do when you discover a murder. I didn't dare call the cops.

As fast as I could, and hating to do it, I bundled Frankie's body back into the closet where I found it. I took my clothes out first, of course, and after I had closed the door on him, I jumped into those clothes fast. My hand was shaking so badly that I had to knot my tie three times. I opened the corridor door and stepped out.

There were six or seven young fellows off a bit toward the under-the-stands exit and they gave me the Bronx cheer when they saw me. Jimmy Flint turned toward them and they kept their dis-

tance. I could see why. There was blood running down Jimmy's chin from a cut on his lip and his knuckles were bloodied.

Ed Piper is waiting to one side. His shirt is wet with perspiration and sticking to his big chest. His straight black hair sort of sticks close to his forehead. He's had a hard night himself, even if he did get a champion out of it. He looks sharply at me.

"Your guy wouldn't let me in, Mc-Millen," he says, "and I just came over to give you the champ's best wishes. You've been a good champ, kid. Slapper couldn't get over. You know how it is—"

He rattles on with the old stuff and all that he had to say wasn't worth hanging around a corridor for. I shake hands with him and send the best wishes to his boy and that's that. Jimmy Flint throws one last dare at the guys in the corridor and edges me toward the regular exit.

"There's a dame waiting for you," he says. "She hung around out here. Blonde kid."

I dropped back and let Ed Piper get away. My heart was flipping over. I'd been running away from what I'd found in my dressing room, with no idea of where I was going or of what I was going to do after they found Frankie Dell. My whole idea was to do the talking where there weren't any hostile people hanging around. I had half decided to tell Jimmy Flint about it, but he was just a big strong kid with no ideas except being a good sparring partner. I hadn't thought of Greta Gallerie. I wouldn't have dared. But if she was waiting for me, I'd take a chance.

CHAPTER III

PAY-OFF ROAD



THERE weren't so many people hanging around when I got out. I went out the bleacher entrance of the ball park like Jimmy Flint told me to do, and there she was.

She had the long blue car pulled in close to the entrance and she was watching nervously. The tight little green hat was stuck on her head with a sort of cant to starboard, and the long feather

that it had was broken smack in the center. Her hair had come kind of loose and was soft gold around her small face. She looked like a little kid. Her eyes lighted up when she saw me.

"Get in," she said. "Hurry!"

She slapped the car into gear as I slid in beside her. I hit the cushions with a jerk.

"Champ," she said, "it was awful."

I tugged at my cap. "What was?"

"Oh, everything."

She was looking straight ahead and tooling the buggy out into the heavy traffic. After the first friendly smile, her face was just a little grim, her chin set and lifted. I wanted to ask her if she believed that I chucked it, and I just couldn't come up to it. I was afraid that she would say "yes" and that I would get out of the car. I settled back and looked straight ahead like she was doing.

"You've got to stay out of sight for a while. Tonight anyway." She bit the words out. "We're going to my place."

"Swell."

I tried to put enthusiasm in it, the enthusiasm that I would have felt if things were different. I couldn't imagine any place I'd rather go than some place where I could be out of sight and just with her. I was staring at the radio on the dash. I was glad that she didn't have it turned on. I was afraid to hear that they had found Frankie Dell and that I was a fugitive. I looked quickly at Greta.

She was still watching traffic intently. I thought that it was kind of a dirty trick to drag her name into it if the cops were hunting for me. Looking at it another way, I hadn't been running around with Greta and nobody would think of looking for me at her place. I would get a little time to think things out and maybe talk to somebody before I gave myself up. I'd have to do that, of course. I was innocent of murder, but it was up to me to prove it. I felt damned tired.

We were clear of heavy traffic and out in the apartment district before Greta spoke again.

"That young kid outside your door wouldn't let anybody in the dressing room," she said. "Why?"

"Because he's a good kid. I didn't want to be bothered."

"Oh."

Her voice was short. I tugged at my cap again. "I don't mean you. I didn't expect you. There were people like Sanger—"

"Sanger's a pretty smart boy."

Her voice was bitter. I couldn't quite figure whether it was bitter at Sanger or what. It might be that she believed I'd gone in the tank and that Sanger predicted it against all of the people who believed in me. I was still trying to think of something to say when she rolled in front of a big apartment building that had a canopy running to the curb and a guy in an admiral's uniform to open doors.

"This is it," she said. "I'll buy a drink."

It was kind of clipped. Not like an invitation so much as it was something that she was going to do. I was remembering again that I didn't know much about women.

If Greta kept on acting like this, I wasn't going to be able to tell her about Frankie Dell being murdered. And if I didn't tell her, who could I tell?



SHE walked in through the door. Her shoulders were very straight and her heels hit hard. I felt awkward walking just a step behind her, but I would have been more awkward catching up. We were very close to the elevators when she turned quickly.

"Champ," she said, "let's sit in the lounge. I've got something to say to you."

"Sure," I said. But I was wondering. Her idea of a drink and her own apartment sounded much better for anything that she had to say. We went into the lounge. It was big and the lights were soft and the furniture was overstuffed. There was no one else in there and we sat in two side-by-side chairs with an ash tray between us. Greta bit her lip.

"Going after you tonight wasn't my idea," she told me quietly, "It was Cash Buhlman's. He wanted to see you without making it public. He—he's waiting upstairs."

I took that like I take a left jab, not enjoying it but knowing that there's more behind it. Greta looked away from me across the lounge. "I couldn't walk you in there without telling you."

"What does Cash want?"

I got the question out because I had to say something. Her eyes flicked back to me. "You ought to know."

"I don't."

"He lost forty thousand dollars on the fight. People who took his advice lost twice as much. It put him in a spot."

"I'm sorry. I didn't win anything myself. I lost a championship."

Her lips tighten.

"It was pretty raw," she says quietly.

I know then that she thought that I dived—and if she believed it, what chance did I have of convincing anyone else? She was very close to me and the soft light brought warm color out of the gold of her hair.

I could hardly take my eyes from her face long enough to think of something to say. She was the only woman that ever made me feel two ways at once—like I had to take her in my arms and like I didn't dare. Yet I had to talk fight to her.

"How did the fight look to you, Greta?" I asked. I didn't realize that I'd called her Greta till it was out and on the record. She didn't seem to notice.

"Terrible. You carried a fighter you could have beaten with one hand, and you went down without being hit. The few times that you hit him he went down, and after that you kept missing him. It was very clumsy and crude and—and dishonest."

Greta had been to a lot of fights and she talked the language. A lot of men who saw that fight probably felt the same way without summing it up so well.

"You're wrong on all counts," I said.

"Let me hear your side of it, then." She didn't sound sore. She sounded like somebody trying to give me a break. But it was hard to sit there with a girl that called me "Champ" and tell the truth.

"Slapper Cody was too fast for me," I told her. "He fought me off balance and kept me there. I don't throw them hard any more unless I get set a little."

I knocked him down in the first round with a punch that missed him. It kind of slid off his chin."

Greta was leaning forward like she wanted to believe me, so I told her how the rest of the fight looked to me—how he made a monkey of me with his speed and made me miss, how he put over the punch that hardly anybody saw. She shook her head slowly.

"I don't think Cash will go for that. He didn't say anything, but he never does. He took me out to the exit and sent me after the car when the mob started for the ring. I was going to drive home with him, but when he came out, he told me to hang around and get you. He figured that *I* could—"

She looked down and scuffed the rug a bit with her toe. Cash Buhlman wanted me and he used her for bait—but she was giving me the tipoff. My heart flipped over slow.

"Cash tried you out with money to see if you'd sell out," she continued, "and you wouldn't play. If you took money from somebody else it was a dirty cross, see? He's waiting upstairs, and—"

I started to get up.

"And maybe he's got a couple of the hoods who collect his bad debts," I guessed, "just to sort of work me over."

Greta looked a bit pale and her eyes were wider than usual. "I don't know, but—"

It was the tip-off, all right, and I knew that I couldn't worry the kid any more with my troubles. I couldn't tell her about Frankie Dell being murdered and about me being in a spot. That wasn't her kind of a show. I could do one of two things. I could go to the cops now, tell them about seeing Buhlman coming out of the dressing room and let them hear from Greta that Buhlman left her for a while after the fight. Or I could go up and lay the cards on the table with Cash Buhlman.

I knew what I'd do without half guessing. Greta knew, too, when she looked at my face.

"I'll go with you," she said, "but I didn't want you to think that I'd trapped you."

I wanted to tell her not to come with me, but she was standing close to me

and looking up into my face. Instead of saying what I planned to say, I took her hand.

"Do you care what I think?" I asked her.

There's a noise from the doorway and we both turn. Slapper Cody is standing there, all duded up in a pin stripe suit and a snap-brim gray felt. The hat comes off when Greta turns, but he's got a sore-pup look before he even recognizes me.

"I ducked a party to come looking for you, kid," he says, "and—"

Then he recognizes me. For a second he is as dazed looking as when I caught him with that inside right in the second round; then he takes a step forward and his eyes get hard.

"What are you doing here?" he growls.

Sure, I know that sounds like a movie, but Slapper Cody was that kind of a guy. Before I can tell him where to get off with the bust-in act, Greta steps between us.

"I'm glad you came, Mike. Awfully glad," she says sweetly. "I want to talk to you. If you'll just excuse me a minute. . . ."

She turns then while I'm still surprised at the fact that Slapper's name is "Mike." She pushes me back a little way and her voice drops. "I've got my key," she said, "because he won't answer the door. Go in and talk to him. I'll be up as soon as I can. Please keep your temper."

She gives me all that in quick rushes and I take the key. Then she whirls away from me and sort of floats over toward Slapper like he's something that her whole evening had been waiting for. The big lug gives me a sort of sneering smile that is a little contemptuous, but his eyes are still hard. I shrug him off and leave him.

What he doesn't know—and I do—is that she called me "Champ" and her name for him is "Mike."



THE place where Greta Galerie lives has touches and it has tone. The key that I take from her looks just like any Yale key in the world except that the name of the apartment house is on it and so is the apartment identification.

It reads "Penthouse A." The lobby of the place has all kinds of dignity; there is no rushing around like in hotels. Coming from the lounge, I don't have to pass the desk. There are two banks of elevators in view. The far bank has elevator pilots on duty; closer to me are two doors marked "Automatic Lift. Penthouses Only."

That "lift" business is English but I kind of like it. I like the idea, too, of not having an elevator boy look me over. The up-and-down jockeys go to fights and read sporting pages. If one of them took me up, he'd be calling the cops as soon as an extra came out about Frankie Dell.

And so I took the lift.

The door of "A" penthouse is green with two gold stripes on it. For a few seconds I stood there looking at it before putting the key into the lock. I had that just-before-the-battle feeling again. Cash Buhlman was a nice guy, but if he lost forty grand on this fight, somebody was going to get hurt. Greta didn't know the half of it. I'd seen lads who had been massaged with brass knuckles, and I'd seen worse. Fighters don't come from the best parts of town.

The door swung open under my hand and the first thing that I hear is the radio. It is turned low and somebody is talking over it. The words don't reach me and I don't care much. I am standing in a wide reception hall, but I don't stand there long. Beyond the hall there is a big room that is like a movie set—rugs scattered about, big comfortable chairs, a fireplace with a log in it and a balcony running around two sides of the room.

Cash Buhlman is lying flat on his back in the middle of the room with blood all over the front of his white shirt, his glassy eyes staring at the ceiling.

It takes me a good ten second count to register it; then I move in cautiously. The room doesn't seem so huge any more. It feels sort of cramped and crowded with death. My legs want to run far and wide away from there and it takes force of will to stay.

Cash Buhlman died hard. His tie is pulled sideways and there is a trail of blood in a half-moon arc across the rug,

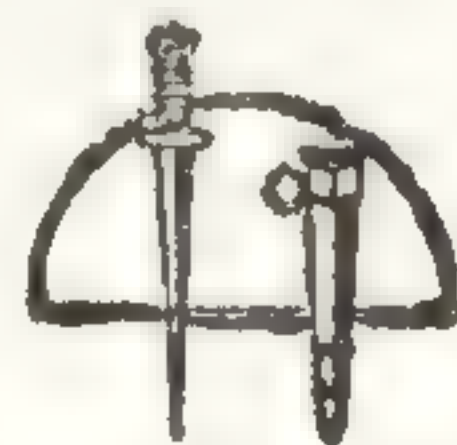
like he threshed around a bit before he rolled over on his back and took the long count. As far as I can see, the wound is like the wound that killed Frankie Dell—the long thrust of a knife into the heart.

Suddenly I become aware of what the radio voice is saying.

". . . and since the discovery of the body, all police agencies have been engaged in a city-wide hunt for ex-middle-weight champion Joe McMillen. According to many witnesses, visitors were barred from McMillen's dressing room after the fight and no one permitted to enter except the champion himself. The police have taken into custody the former sparring partner of McMillen, James Flint, who admits that he stood guard before the dressing room door and kept intruders away. Flint admits that he left the arena with the former champion, but states that they parted at the exit gate and that he does not know where McMillen went. Private citizens are urged to call the police if they have any information about McMillen. . . ."

Another voice came in with station identification and I turned the radio off. I wasn't thinking when I did it, wasn't considering that the radio should be left alone just like the corpse should be until the cops took over. All I could think of was that the cops were looking for me, that Jimmy Flint had kept his mouth shut about Greta, and that Jimmy was probably being worked on right now in some station house. I was cold clean down to my shoes.

After what had happened within a few brief minutes tonight I didn't have a story that would stand up nor a friend that I could depend on. And I had a murder rap facing me.



I LOOKED down at Cash Buhlman. There was plenty of light in the penthouse and the blood on his shirt front looked kind of shiny. That fact brought me up straight.

Cash Buhlman hadn't been dead long. The blood hadn't dried or soaked in. I looked quickly toward the door. If Greta kept her word, she would be along pretty soon. Greta had tried to believe in me,

but even with a good seat at the fight, she thought that I went into the tank for Slapper Cody. What would she think when she came up here and found me in the room and Cash Buhlman dead?

I knew the answer to that. Even without hearing about Frankie Dell, she'd have to believe that I killed Cash. She'd been afraid of trouble when she sent me up—and here it was.

My brain refused to take the who-did-kill-him hurdle. I couldn't guess. Whoever did it was the same lad who killed Frankie, and he was as safe as a church just so long as there was a boob named McMillen around to come tracking in and draw all the attention. I was scared. I wanted to run, but I had enough sense left to know that I wouldn't run far. Instead, I went through the penthouse.

It was a woman's place and not nearly as big as it looked most of the size was false front like the balcony that seemed to be leading to rooms and which really led nowhere. Mirrors helped, too. What there was of it was filled with cushions, scented up like no man would have it and hung with pictures. There was a piano and a lot of books with bright jackets and all kinds of funny shaped ash trays in different colors.

In the guest bedroom I found Baldy Miske.

The guy who had been in my corner through all of my important fights and who had taken a runout on me tonight without listening to my side of it was sprawled across the pale blue coverlet of a ladylike bed, and he was dead drunk.

For a few seconds I thought he might be stalling, and I shook him up a bit. He was limp as a wet towel and he didn't even grunt. When I went back into the big room, I was convinced. There was a quart bottle of rye lying on its side near one of the chairs and there was no liquor stain on the rug. If there'd been enough left in the bottle to provide a good eye-opener, it would have run out. I'd seen Baldy drink from the neck of a whiskey bottle before after a big fight, and I'd seen him pass out before, too.

What I wanted to know was how Baldy got here and if he knew anything about the murder.

I was noticing things again; I wasn't so rattled by the idea of a dead man in the room. There hadn't been much of a row. Except for the spot where Cash Buhlman was lying, the room was not mussed up. I couldn't help recalling what Greta said about Cash. He wouldn't let anyone in when she wasn't there—I would have to use the key.



ONCE you get thinking, thoughts just pile up. It's just like when you land the punch that puts the other mauler off balance; you hit him four or five times before he can get out of the way. If Cash wouldn't let anyone in, then somebody came in with him. He could have picked up Baldy easy enough and he might have wanted to get Baldy's slant on the fight. Maybe there was somebody else, too, and when Baldy passed out, the other guy killed Cash.

I wasn't so sure about that. If Cash wanted to talk to Baldy, he wouldn't want any of his mob along or any of the other gamblers who strung along with him—not anybody who might have been the logical killer.

He especially wouldn't when he expected me. Just taking Baldy along with him showed that he hadn't made up his mind yet. He wanted to be sure of what happened in that fight before he went into action. But who else would fit in about like Baldy?

I had seen Ed Piper at the stadium just before I left and I had Jimmy Flint with me and—Al Sanger!

The newspaper man was my idea of a guy that would commit murder. I'd thrown him out of the dressing room and Frankie Dell had bawled him out at the last workout before the fight. He was a scandal sniffer and a disgrace to the sports pages. I felt rather excited at the mere idea of remembering him, and I was wishing suddenly that I was a police force.

I would call the desk and find out if Cash took any phone calls, if anyone came in with him and if someone came down from the penthouse lately. And I'd find out just what time Cash came in.

I stopped there. I was remembering

the discreet location of the penthouse elevators. People who lived in penthouses wanted privacy and lots of them entertained people who didn't want to be seen. There was a good chance that nobody could tell when Cash came in or who was with him. As for people leaving, the same thing might be true. Or a guy could walk a few floors down and take an elevator without attracting attention. I lost my police ambition right there.

They were looking for me because of a murder I ran away from—and when they found me in the room with another dead man, then I'd be answering questions; I wouldn't be asking them.

I decided right there what I was going to do. Get out of there damned quick, get hold of Jimmy Flint if they'd sprung him and then kidnap Al Sanger. If I couldn't get Jimmy's help, I'd go it alone. I'd get Al Sanger off somewhere and third degree the truth out of him myself. He fitted my idea of a murder picture and I'd prove it on him if I had to beat his head off. I felt the pulse beat in my muscles at the thought.

And I'd taken just two steps toward the door when there was a knock. It was a gentle knock, but it sounded like the crack of doom. I had fooled around too long and now I had Greta Gallerie to figure into the place. For a second it stopped me, and then my chin came up. It was a whole lot better this way.

Dusting out and leaving her with a

"Why did you kill him?" he growled.



murder in her apartment would have been a dirty trick. It might be awfully hard to convince her that I didn't kill Cash Buhlman, but I would do it.

When I opened, there were three people outside. Greta was standing there with a worried look on her face and right behind her was Slapper Cody with his manager, Ed Piper.

"They knew you were here," she half whispered, "and they insisted on coming up. Is everything all right?"

I guess my face told her that everything wasn't, because she brushed right by me. She took one look into the big room and screamed.

CHAPTER IV

POLICE PARTY



WE WERE all in motion when Greta screamed — Slapper Cody, Ed Piper and I. I got into the room a little faster because I was closer to it, but Slapper was right at my shoulder and I could feel Ed Piper close behind me. Greta had thrown herself down on her knees beside the body of Cash Buhlman and was gripping his hand tight. Sobs shook her for a moment and Slapper Cody cursed under his breath. Slapper was half crouched and there was sweat gleaming on his face.

I am nearly a head taller than Piper, and I have to look down at him. He is staring bug-eyed at Greta and not doing any more than Slapper or me. And if anybody is going to take the lead in getting something done, Ed Piper is the boy to do it. He's a manager and he knows how to do things.

Suddenly Greta turns and her head comes up. Her eyes are blank and all swimmy with tears for a moment, and then she looks at me and her face gets all savage and hard. She comes to her feet with her little fists clenched and charges at me.

"You—you dirty murderer. You—"

She is across the room before I have begun to untrack, is beating at me with fists that wouldn't have hurt a boy scout. I make a grab for her hands, and as soon as her fists are slowed down, she turns her head.

"He killed my father," she sobs. "Help me!"

That "father" angle takes my wind like a shot under the ribs, and I loosen my grip on her wrists. I am stiff with surprise, just staring at her and reaching inside of my bean for words, when —biff!

Slapper Cody hauls off and lets me have it on the chin.

The room rocks like a four bit excursion boat and Slapper trips over Greta as he tries to follow up on me. I can see his face through a sort of haze. He is hating me like he hated me in the ring, his eyes sort of blazing and his broad features all twisted. My hands are up

instinctively and Ed Piper dives low for my knees.

Ed is short, but he packs weight. He hits me like a truck, and I'm wobbly already from that clean shot at the jaw that Slapper had, so there's nothing to it.

I smack the floor with a thud and Ed Piper slugs me twice before he sits on my chest and gets his knee unto my left bicep. Far off in the fog, I can hear Greta's hysterical voice on the telephone.

"Police," she is saying. "Send the police up here. My father has been murdered—"

There is no percentage in fighting back now and I let myself relax. The idea of Cash Buhlman being Greta's father is a sock in itself. I'd often wondered, but I never figured it close. He was seen with her a lot and some people had an idea that he put dough behind her career on the stage, but I don't think anybody guessed the truth. She went around with men and like I said before, she seemed to like pugs. A guy would have to be dumber even than I was to miss the obvious fact that she had been pretty friendly with Slapper and that he had taken it seriously.

All of a sudden, with Ed Piper's heavy body pinning me to the floor, I got a rush of memory. There had been that second round when Slapper and I locked in a clinch near my corner. I'd had my back to my own corner, and just the round before I had seen Greta there behind the press seats with Cash Buhlman. Slapper had stiffened against me for a split second like he was counting the house and he had stopped punching. I knew now what he had seen.

He had looked over my shoulder and straight at Greta. She was sitting back of my corner and she was with Cash Buhlman. Slapper didn't know that Cash was her father any more than I did—he'd been getting ideas, perhaps. Anyhow, he forgot that he was fighting and I knocked him cold while he was staring. If the bell hadn't saved him then, there might not have been all this mess.

That much passes through my mind with the speed of light, and it helps to clear the cobwebs away. I'm in the worst spot that a man can be in, but I've got

a hunch that I have stumbled on an angle. Somebody killed Frankie Dell and the same man killed Cash Buhlman. I am going to be charged with it in a few minutes, but I've got the edge on all the sleuths if I can keep my head.

In those few seconds while I sprawled spread-eagle on the floor, I threw out the idea of Al Sanger being the killer. I'd been punched clear-headed. I remembered how he came into the dressing room with a bunch of insulting language in his mouth and a photographer at his back. No man would come in like that if he'd killed a man in that dressing room a few minutes before.

Sanger wouldn't fit—and in concentrating on him, I had been as dumb as the cops were going to be when they concentrated on me. I had closed my mind to ideas and I'd stopped thinking.



THERE was a clatter in the corridor and the reception hall, the thud of heavy feet, and I knew that the cops had come. Ed Piper knew it, too. I had been lying there quietly under his weight but he twisted suddenly like I'd been struggling and he socked me twice in the chin.

He was hauling off for another crack when the cops came in and pulled him off.

There's a square-jawed plain-clothes dick named O'Toole that I've seen at training camps in charge of the bust-in. He's got a snub-nosed gun in his fist and it is sighted at me.

"Get up!" he says.

I am a little groggy; my knees go a bit rubbery while another dick goes over me for weapons. They don't find anything and they sit me in a chair. A doctor from the apartment house is looking at the body and there is a harness bull standing at the door to keep out the curious. O'Toole has left the other dick to stand over me and he is looking at the body. Greta is sitting down and dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief, her head turned away from the corpse. Slapper Cody is sitting on the edge of another chair and watching Greta as though he'd like to be over patting her shoulder. As who wouldn't? His manager is standing just back of Slapper's chair.

Ed Piper is acting important. His straight black hair is a bit mussed and hanging down over his forehead. Two buttons have popped off his vest and he is showing more waist-line than he usually does, but he doesn't seem to be conscious of it.

"McMillen give me quite a battle," he says, "but I know that you boys will be wanting him and I hangs on."

He's talking to a cop, who just nods sort of politely and gives his attention to the doctor and to O'Toole. The doctor draws a piano scarf over the body and stands up. He and O'Toole have a whispered consultation and anybody can figure that out. There isn't anything that a doctor can do; he's resigning the rest of the job to the man from the coroner's office. O'Toole goes over and talks to Greta, but she doesn't want to take a rest. She wants to stay and give them all she knows, and they let her.

Without looking at me once, she tells them about the bout looking bad to her, about Cash having a lot of money bet on me and about Cash being worried about his connections because he passed the word along for them to go down on me. Slapper Cody looks uncomfortable and so does Ed Piper when she talks about that—and O'Toole cuts in.

"Why did he figure McMillen such a cinch?" he asked softly.

Everybody in the room, including me, stiffens up to attention at that. Greta takes it calmly.

"He watched them both train," she said, "and he saw the—the champion knock out sparring partners with an inside punch. He thought that punch would win for him if he was on the level. He offered him a lot of money to throw the fight, just to see if he was honest about it. The champion wouldn't take any amount and that made my father sure that he was all right—"

There's a stir at the door and I can see that Sanger and a couple of other newspaper men have crashed the party. They all look at me when that comes out and I'm glad that the fact is on the record. It is something in my favor when everything else is against me.

O'Toole was standing with his hands behind his back, rocking a bit from

his toes to his heels and back again.

"So your father was sore when Mc-Millen threw the fight?" he said.

There it was, the thing that everybody believed. I half started to get up and argue. Greta didn't look at me, but she spoke before I could get my mouth open.

"I don't know," she said slowly. "I don't know if he believed that. He didn't say. He just told me to hang around and bring the champ out so he could talk to him without people seeing him and getting ideas."

Right then I knew that I was in love with Greta Gallerie. Hating me and sure that I murdered her father, she was still being fair and giving me the break. She wasn't jumping to any conclusions and saying things she didn't know for a fact. And she still called me "champ." I scarcely heard the rest of her story.



SHE told O'Toole about getting me and about warning me that her father had lost money and that he might be very sore if he thought that I had thrown the fight. Then she told about Slapper Cody showing up and of sending me up alone. It seems that Ed Piper showed up later. He had been looking for Slapper Cody ever since Slapper ducked out on him at the stadium. When she finished up her story by telling about coming in and finding her father dead, her voice broke all in pieces. O'Toole covered up for her by turning quickly to me.

"Why did you kill him?" he growled.

The answer was a cinch.

"I didn't," I told him.

"You didn't kill Frankie Dell, either, I suppose?" His voice was hard and he brought half the people in the room up in their chairs, including Greta. They hadn't heard about Frankie. I shook my head.

"No."

"You didn't even know he was dead, huh?"

"I found him dead. He was in the closet where I kept my clothes, I took my clothes out and I put him back."

That had them all gasping for air, including O'Toole. And a man doesn't get to be champion without knowing how to follow up when the other guy is on the

ropes. I leaned forward with my jaw set as hard as any cop's.

"I was all alone when I found him," I said, "and half the crowd that saw that fight was ready to lynch me already. What chance did I have if I called the cops? I had to get away, and if Miss Gallerie hadn't picked me up, I'd have come here anyway. Because just before I went into my dressing room, I saw Cash Buhlman coming out."

It bomb-shelled them. Greta jumped up out of her chair and O'Toole pressed her back gently.

"He's just hanging himself," he said. "Let him talk."

"Cash didn't kill him," I said, "because Cash got killed the same way. There wasn't any knife in my dressing room. And there isn't any here. That's my best argument. I didn't have any way of getting rid of a knife if I killed Cash."

Immediately everybody started to look around the floor. There was a lot of furniture moved around, and then one of the dicks gave a grunt. He pawed under the edge of the chair that Slapper Cody had been sitting in and came up with a black-hilted stiletto that had a six inch blade.

"This will do," he says, "until we find something else. It's been wiped, though."

O'Toole stares a hole in me as my best argument goes to dust, but he hasn't got me covering up. I've been through enough of this to warm up and it's like the feeling I always get when I start the second round. I am inside the ropes and on my own, and the tension of waiting for the action is over. It's a plain case now of sock 'em out or get my head socked off. And for once I've done a bit of brain work. That statement of mine was a plant.

I'd been over the room, you see, and that stiletto wasn't there before the cops came. That meant that the murderer was among us. I acted a bit meek before O'Toole now—the old business of leaving an opening to draw the other guy's lead.

"Before I talk," I asks him, "how do you figure me on a motive?"

He measures me coldly.

"You sold out," he said, "and took a dive without taking your manager in on the deal. Maybe you thought you were

cute enough to get away with it, but the crowd told you different, and when Frankie Dell told you that he was in the pool that put up the money for that last minute splash that changed the odds—and that he'd put up your share of the purse with his own—then you got sore and killed him."

O'Toole had me there. I said that I played to him like a fighter drawing a lead. Well, he played back like a guy who throws dynamite through the opening. My share of tonight's purse was bet on myself! I blinked.

"Frankie didn't—" I said weakly.

"He did. And you knew it, you louse!" O'Toole threw the whip into his words. "And when Cash Buhlman told you that he couldn't save you from the put-and-take boys who went into the pool with heavy money, then you slaughtered him, too."

I stood up and spread my hands wide, conscious of the fact that a cop closed in on me when I moved. I was still inside the ropes with these cops and I still had my stuff.

"Okay," I said. "You wouldn't look around for a weapon till I told you. You won't look for a murderer until I tell you, either. Baldy Mike was out of my corner before Frankie was or I was. His stuff was in the dressing room before I was, and the sponge was on top of Frankie's blood. You'll find Baldy on a bed in the next room."

Did I bring a roundhouse right up from the floor and land with it when I tossed that statement at them!



FOR a few minutes there was plenty of excitement around there while the cops found Baldy and decided that he was too dead drunk for questioning. They had already ear-marked the whiskey bottle for the finger-print boys, and Baldy fitted in with that okay. For the first time, O'Toole showed me a little respect.

"Let's have your story, McMillen," he said, "and fit Baldy Miske in it if he fits."

It was the moment that I had been waiting for, the moment when I wasn't just answering questions, when I could run the show and set my own pace the way a champion gets in the habit of

doing. I looked around. Sanger was watching me with his eyes narrowed. Greta was sitting on the edge of her chair with her wadded handkerchief squeezed tight. Ed Piper was sitting on the arm of Slapper Cody's chair, and he was looking at me kind of puzzled. Slapper looked worried, and he was watching Greta more than he was watching me. O'Toole still rocked with his hands behind him.

"In the first place, Miss Gallerie's story is all okay," I said, "but she didn't know enough. If it's true about Frankie Dell being in that pool with Cash Buhlman, then she didn't know half enough. Cash offered me fifteen grand to take a dive. I didn't know that he was only testing me. I was almost tempted, because I knew that Slapper was about the best man that I'd met and *I knew that I'd slipped a long way.*"

That got them. O'Toole leaned forward. "You didn't think you'd win?"

It was hard to answer that one.

"I figured that the odds of three to one against me were about right," I told him.

Sanger said something to the man next to him. I didn't hear it, but I looked at him sharply. He wasn't sneering like he usually was. There was a crease in his forehead.

"Cash was no sucker," I said, "and neither was Frankie Dell. They saw me train. They both knew that I had to chill sparring partners to get a rest. Neither one of them would have put money on my chances to win."

"They did."

"Okay." I looked at Slapper Cody. "So there's only one answer to that. Slapper must have made a deal to go into the tank. He must have taken fifteen grand or less to lose."

Slapper jumped up, but a cop got in his way. Ed Piper shook his fist.

"That's a lie," he stormed.

I let him yell. I could see how the others took it and if the facts didn't make sense as I put them, they wouldn't make sense any way that they were put. I didn't add one fact to my story but I was remembering that look of hate in Slapper's eyes and Ed Piper's grouch when he came to inspect my bandages.

Even for cash, of course, they'd hate to lose a championship fight that they could win. There was probably other pressure on them. I knew how gamblers worked.

"Slapper was paving the way for it to look good," I said, "when he went down in the first round from a punch that brushed his chin."

Sanger cut in. "And in the second?" He was eyeing me sharply.

"In the second," I said, "I knocked him cold. I didn't know it then, but I knew later, that he was just making up his mind not to throw the fight when I smacked him."

I looked at Greta Gallerie and her eyes were wide. There was a bit of color in her face.

"In the third," I went on, "Slapper made a sucker out of me with his speed. Maybe he was just paving the way to tell the boys that I was so bad that he couldn't throw the fight. I think he was showing me up. The crowd thought I went down from a light left. They didn't see that right hand at the break that nearly broke me in two—"

Both Slapper and Piper are trying to interrupt me and the cops piped them down. The room is very tense.

"Two men were sure to see that punch," I said, "Frankie Dell and Ed Piper. Managers don't miss punches when their boys are in the ring. And if Frankie saw that punch, he knew I didn't dive."

I tossed that and let it land. It broke the motive that O'Toole had hung on me and I wanted the room to think it over.

"Cash Buhlman would figure on the managers seeing what happened, too," I added, "and he'd figure on asking them."

"How about the handlers seeing, too?" O'Toole threw that one. He was trying to work me around to Baldy Miske. I waved it off.

"Maybe, maybe not. You've seen Baldy in the next room. He's a good man in a corner but not clean enough in the eyes to follow fast action. Baldy thought I dived. He ran out on me—"

"And killed Dell?" O'Toole was skeptical.

"I never said so. He was the first one in the dressing room, the way I figure,

because he left first. The way the bucket and stuff was in the room, I figure he just tossed them in through the door and beat it. He was probably half drunk already by the time Cash Buhlman ran into him and brought him out here on the chance that he might know something. That's a guess."

O'Toole is frowning at me like I've kidded him and the rest of the room is still tense.

"Figure it out yourself," I said, "If Frankie Dell and I had made a deal to dive and then I didn't do it, we'd be scared that the gamblers would have us rubbed out."



I GOT up on my feet. My long story had pulled everyone into the room; reporters and harness bull and all, they were lounged around and watching me. I had my story figured out.

"So Slapper crossed the gamblers up," I growled, "and Ed Piper got scared. He tried to see Frankie Dell before anyone else to see if he could convince him that I'd sold out. Frankie never took that kind of stuff from anyone, and—"

Ed Piper lunged forward past a cop. "You mugg! Are you saying that I killed Frankie?"

There's sweat all over his face and I look straight at him.

"I am." I tell him. "There was something hard in your belt behind those torn buttons of your vest when you sat on me. There wasn't any knife around here. I tricked you into—"

He lost his head and came into me swinging as he headed for the door. Something deep down inside of me laughed out loud and I put a left hook just over his eye tooth. He hit the floor just a foot away from Cash Buhlman's body and I shifted just a little.

Slapper Cody had dropped into his crouch and balled up his fists like a fighter will when there's fists flying. It was all the excuse that I needed, and I owed the Slapper a lot.

He shifted with me, but he didn't have a wide ring and a fast canvas and a set of ropes to play on. I hit him with my left, let him hit me three times and then crossed him with the right, close and

inside, like the one that I threw at him in that second round.

He went down in a heap about the time that the cops pinioned my arms, and that was all of the party.

For the next ten minutes, I'm explaining myself, and there isn't much to explain. After I started thinking, it was a cinch. The only people who stood to gain by me being on the spot were Ed Piper and Slapper Cody. Slapper was a new champ and he had no chance to commit any murders. Ed Piper was different. If the gamblers could be convinced that Slapper tried to deliver and that I beat him to the dive, then Ed Piper had a chance of living to collect a champion's split on a few gates. Otherwise, nix. Frankie Dell was the one man who could have spilled that apple cart. So he was sliced.

And as it came out when Ed Piper broke down and spilled it all, he was just looking for Slapper when he came to Greta's apartment. He phoned first. Cash was there and told him to come up. When he fumbled his story and found that Cash knew about Frankie being murdered, then he lost his head and rubbed Cash, too. He hung around then and came in after Slapper showed up, figuring that would keep him alibied.

The only thing that was never clear was about Frankie Dell's body in the closet. Ed Piper says he left it on the floor, so maybe when Cash came to see Frankie and found him like that, he hid the body, because he was afraid maybe a gambler did it and he wanted to get some facts before he had to stand any

heat. That sounds reasonable, anyway.

It's been a tough session and I am feeling like I've gone twenty rounds with an infighter when I get away from the questioners. Greta puts a hand on my arm; her big eyes are swimming in tears when she looks up at me.

"Champ," she says, "I'm so sorry—"

Suddenly I am not afraid of her any more. I close my hand over hers and I can feel her pulse keeping time with my heart.

"Greta," I tell her, "I don't know what I can do for a living and I haven't got much now, but—"

There's a tap on my shoulder and Sanger is grinning at me. He doesn't look as bad as I've always remembered him.

"Kid," he said, "this spot isn't private enough for that. And if you're worrying about dough, take an old cynic's tip. Whatever they prove on Ed Piper, they'll white-wash Slapper. He'll be the lily-white who wouldn't dive for the big bad manager. And you two guys will draw a half million gate for a return go."

I take a look at Slapper Cody, who is holding a wet towel on his jaw, and I am thinking that I will have to get Jimmy Flint out of the can and that I'll never hire Baldy again, the old drunkard. Then I look back at Al Sanger.

"I'll fight him, of course," I said, "but don't lay any bets that—"

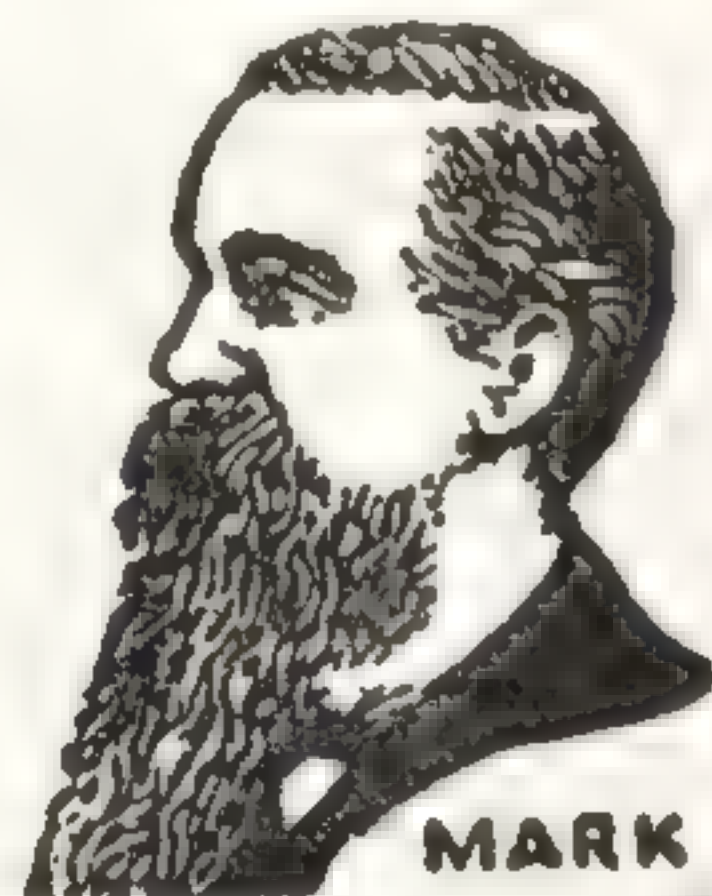
He laughs out loud.

"Kid," he said, "I never bet on fights."

The joke is, though, that Sanger was right. We did have a big gate. Also I knocked Slapper cold in four heats. I was never so surprised in my life.



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*"We may as well
have it out here."*



PEACE MARSHAL

Second part of four

By FRANK GRUBER

SOME said that the West could never be tamed, yet already, in 1872, the first effects were being felt. Eastern railroads were laying their tracks towards the setting sun. Soon would come the day when Texas cattle would be driven up the Chisholm Trail, shipped from a Kansas depot, and be sold in Eastern markets within a few days.

Towns and men were feeling the far-reaching effects. Mushroom cities sprang

up over night, flourished until the railroad had pushed beyond them, and then died. And people in the know could plan accordingly—and make tremendous fortunes.

Such a man was Jeff Barat, adventurer, gambler and gun-fighter. With his brother, an Eastern financier, he planned to buy up land in Broken Lance, Kansas, block the road to the railroad, and assess a charge on every Texas herd that came



up the Trail. And when any objection was offered, there was always the law of a six-gun, and hard-bitten gun-fighters to enforce it.

It was a good plan, but another man had the same idea. John Bonniwell, famous throughout the West after his gun fight with four notorious killers, had recovered from five serious wounds, and was back to try his luck again. With Tom Waggoner, his friend, he bought up land before the Barats could acquire it—and the start of a feud began to flare.

Bonniwell had hoped to remain unrecognized in his new surroundings, but events forced his hand. A Texas bad man was terrorizing Baker, Kansas, and for

the sake of two women who were in danger of being shot, Bonniwell took the place of the slain marshal and subdued the gang.

The curse of John Bonniwell was that everything he did was spectacular. After the Baker incident, he knew that the new life he had planned was not to be. Wherever he went, now, it would be to face vengeance from Texas guns, and men who knew no law.

There was only one answer. He had made his name wearing a silver badge. He would still have to fight on the side of the law. Reluctantly, yet not without a curious thrill, he accepted Baker's pleas that he ride shotgun on the Broken

Lance stage. And from all indications, the trip would not be free from attack.

CHAPTER VII

AMBUSH



THAT part of Baker which was not sleeping it off from the night before was gathered around the stagecoach office at ten o'clock, the time scheduled for the stage to depart. Billy Coogan was the driver. He was already up on the box trying to hold in his six-horse team. Tom Waggoner was beside him. In the coach the two Barat brothers had made themselves comfortable. There was another man with them, a man wearing a long, black coat, a flat-crowned black hat and a white collar turned backwards. He had a meek looking face, but his eyes were bright. He was the Reverend James Fellows. Bonniwell sat on the top of the stagecoach, his legs dangling over the loaded boot. His two Frontier Models were conspicuous. Beside him lay a short double-barreled shotgun and across his knees a .45-.75 Winchester rifle. He was really armed.

"I'm all ready!" Billy Coogan called down to the express agent.

"Two more passengers," said the agent. "Here they come."

Bonniwell did not turn his head. He did not see them until they were directly under him, entering the coach. Lou Sager spoke to him then. "Good morning, Mr. Bonniwell."

Bonniwell looked down. "Morning, Miss Sager." And then his eyes met the upturned face of Eleanor Simmons.

She looked at him for a full second and then, without a sign of recognition, got up into the coach.

"Let her roll!" yelled the agent.

Billy Coogan started to crack his long whip, but before it snapped the six-horse team was leaping away. They were off—for Broken Lance, a hundred miles to the southwest. Trail's end.

It took a person with a strong constitution to make an extended stagecoach trip. The trail that served for a road was rutted. When there was a hole or a boulder the road swerved sharply out. The horses never slackened for any de-

tour. They traveled at almost a continuous gallop. The coach swayed and jounced the passengers all around. It was fortunate that they had to change horses every few hours.

The first change was made so quickly that the passengers scarcely got time to relax. The man in charge of the horse station had the fresh team waiting, already harnessed. It was only a minute's work to unhitch the tired horses and substitute the fresh, and then they were off again.

Shortly after two the stage rolled into another station and Billy Coogan announced, "Half hour for lunch, folks."

Everyone got off the coach and went into the cabin. Plates and food were already on the table and they ate quickly. There was still ten minutes left when Bonniwell and Waggoner went outside.

"Another hour or two and I think we'll be all right, John," Waggoner said.

Bonniwell nodded. "Yes, I think if they are going to make any attempts they'll make it soon."

Lou Sager came out of the station. Bonniwell walked over to her. She looked at him, worried. "Mr. Bonniwell, I wonder if you would mind telling me just who this Mr. Barat is—the younger one."

"He's a gambler," Bonniwell said. "You remember he was on the train with us."

"I know that," Lou Sager said. "I remember them both, but—he's making an awfully big play for that poor Simmons girl. He seems to know her uncle."

"Everybody knows her uncle. He's known as One Percent Simmons."

Eleanor Simmons came out of the log cabin, talking with Jeff Barat. She did not look in Bonniwell's direction. He nodded to Lou Sager and climbed up to his perch again. The others got on the stage. And then they were off again.

"Four minutes ahead of time," said Billy Coogan. "Maybe I'll set a record this trip."

"You'll set a record if you get us there on time," Tom Waggoner said dryly.



THEY were thirty minutes out of the station when Bonniwell first saw the riders. They were more than two miles away and riding parallel with the coach.

They kept that distance for another ten minutes and then came closer. Tom Waggoner saw them, then.

"John!" he exclaimed. "Look to the right."

"I've been watching them," said Bonniwell. "There're eight of them."

Billy Coogan cracked his whip over the lead team. The animals were already going as fast as they could.

After a few minutes Bonniwell said, "Pull up, Billy. We might as well have it out here."

"Are you going to fight them, John?" asked Waggoner.

Bonniwell shrugged. "You don't want to lose your payroll, do you?"

"No."

The riders were within a half mile when the stage pulled up in a cloud of dust.

Jeff Barat tumbled out.

"Are we going to stand them off?" he cried.

Bonniwell did not reply. He picked up the Winchester, took careful aim and squeezed the trigger. The gun made a tremendous roar as the huge bullet went singing out into space. Bonniwell levered another bullet quickly into the chamber, aimed and fired again.

"A horse down!" cried Tom Waggoner. "Man, what shooting!"

The riders were suddenly spreading out, but they were still coming on. A bullet hummed through the air several feet from Bonniwell.

He continued firing until he had sent six bullets at the highwaymen. Then he suddenly began climbing down from his perch.

"Everybody out and down on the ground!" he ordered.

The passengers began climbing out on the side away from the approaching riders. Bonniwell slammed a couple of cartridges into the Winchester, rested the big rifle against the side of the coach, and sent a bullet towards the leading bandit, now less than a quarter of a mile away.

He grunted in satisfaction when he saw the horse break its stride and throw its rider. He fired once more with the rifle, then dropped it and picked up the shotgun he had brought down with

him. But it wasn't necessary. The bandits had had enough of Bonniwell's long distance shooting. They suddenly broke and wheeled back the way they had come, two horses carrying double.

"That's all," said Bonniwell.

"They got enough of your shooting!" exclaimed Billy Coogan.

"God, what a country!" exclaimed Ferdinand Barat, picking himself up off the ground.

The girls were getting into the stage-coach again. Lou Sager stopped to flash a smile at Bonniwell. The minister was the last to get in. He stopped with one foot on the step and turned to Bonniwell.

"If they had come all the way, what would you have done?" he asked.

Bonniwell looked him squarely in the eye.

"I would have killed as many as possible," he replied.



THE bandits disappeared over the horizon and the stage-coach resumed its journey. About seven o'clock they stopped at a station for supper. Jeff Barat negotiated so that he would sit next to Bonniwell.

"I liked your work yesterday," he said to Bonniwell. "I liked it even better today."

Bonniwell grunted and continued cutting meat.

"I'm going to locate in Broken Lance," Barat continued. "I need some good men. I'd like to have you with me, Bonniwell."

"Doing what?"

"Whatever's necessary. I've got a hunch Broken Lance is going to grow, and I figger on going into the real estate business."

Bonniwell was thoughtful for a moment. Then he said, "Let's talk about it again in Broken Lance. I may not like the town well enough to stay."

This was the last stop they made. They reached the town of Broken Lance at a dead run shortly after ten o'clock. Broken Lance was small. It consisted of a mere huddle of buildings. It wasn't so small, however, that there weren't two saloons in the town. Before he climbed

down from his perch, Bonniwell spoke to Waggoner. "You've been here before, Tom. Will you see about finding lodgings for the women folk?"

"Sure. I was going to do it, anyway. There's a Mrs. Kelsey has some rooms."

Bonniwell turned over the rifle and shotgun to the express agent of Broken Lance and clumped up the street to the closest saloon. It was a smaller edition of the roaring saloons of Baker. It was quite well patronized. He went inside and had one glass of whisky to cut the dust from his throat.

Ten minutes later Tom Waggoner came in.

"What do you think of Broken Lance, John?" he asked.

"It doesn't look like much."

"No, but you just wait about five or six days, when folks hear that the railroad's coming in this direction. Then you'll see a stampede like you never saw in your life. This is going to be a permanent city, not like Baker or the others."

"Tom," Bonniwell said, "do you suppose the Barats know?"

"Not unless they got an inside tip somewheres. Even the workmen don't know which way the road goes. Only the chief engineer and some of the boys at the top."

"Ferd Barat was a big man in New York. I read in the papers that he was knee deep in railroads. I figure, Tom, it's got to be something big that would bring him out here to this country. He doesn't like it."

"Broken Lance is going to be big, but I'd hate to see a couple of wolves like those Barats get a strangle hold on this town. John—" he caught hold of Bonniwell's arm suddenly—"let's step aside here a minute."

When they were out of earshot of the other patrons of the saloon, Tom Waggoner spoke in a low, excited tone. "You've got about eight hundred dollars. Counting the money you paid me back I've got about that much myself. There're several people who know me here and will lend me money."

"Why do you want money?" Bonniwell asked.

Waggoner gripped Bonniwell's arm.

"I've got a hunch about those Barats and I want to beat them. Look. They figger they've got the inside track, but they're not going to do anything this evening. You and I are. We're going to buy up as much of Broken Lance as we can—tonight. If we don't, the Barats will grab it tomorrow. I've got a survey of Broken Lance in my carpet bag. Let's go take a look at it."



TOM WAGGONER was well known in Broken Lance. He had spent a week here, surveying for the railroad. When Waggoner and Bonniwell entered the Broken Lance Saloon and Dance Hall, Waggoner was greeted on all sides.

Waggoner picked out a man at a faro layout, waited until he had lost a small bet, then tugged at his sleeve. "Like to talk to you a minute, Mr. Sheidler."

"Why, sure, Mr. Waggoner," Sheidler exclaimed heartily. They moved to one side and Waggoner introduced Bonniwell. "Mr. Sheidler, shake hands with John Bonniwell."

Sheidler's eyes narrowed speculatively. He held out his hand. "I've heard of you, Mr. Bonniwell. Guess everyone around here has. You goin' to stay in Broken Lance?"

"For a while, maybe."

"You own some land here, Mr. Sheidler," Waggoner said quietly. "Wonder if you'd be interested in selling it?"

A pleased expression came to Sheidler's face. "I've got a hundred and sixty acres, right outside of Broken Lance," he said. "If any fool'd offer me two dollars an acre for it, he'd have it so quick he wouldn't know what'd happened."

"The railroad's coming to Broken Lance," said Waggoner. "Your land will go up in value."

Sheidler shrugged. "It's gettin' crowded around here. For three hundred dollars extra I'll throw in the block I own across the street."

"You've made a sale, Mr. Sheidler," declared Waggoner. "I'll pay you fifty dollars right now to bind the bargain and the balance soon's I can get the money out of the company bank."

Waggoner pulled a notebook out of his pocket, scribbled a bill of sale and hand-

ed it to Sheidler to sign. As simply as that Sheidler's property changed hands.

They had a drink, then Waggoner pulled Josh Hudkins out of a poker game.

"How's the store, Josh?" he asked amiably.

"Not so good, Tom," replied Hudkins. "If you'd hurry up and bring your railroad to Broken Lance I might do some business in buffalo hides, but the way things are now it costs too much to freight them to Baker. Don't leave no profit."

"The railroad's coming, Josh," Waggoner told the merchant. "Be here in a month."

"By then, I won't be in business. Not the mercantile business anyway. On'y thing worth while around here is the saloon business."

"I'll buy your store, Josh," said Waggoner, "just the building and the vacant lot next to it. I'll give you five hundred dollars for it. It'll help you hang on until the railroad comes."

"It's a deal."

"Fine—and you'll get free rent for six months."

He paid Hudkins fifty dollars down, with which the merchant promptly returned to the poker game. He told the poker players about his good fortune, and that resulted in Bonniwell's buying two town lots and a couple of tracts on the nearby prairie. The sellers promptly went out to spread the good news.

By eleven o'clock in the evening, Waggoner was sitting behind a table conducting a thriving real estate business. Bonniwell sat at his elbow, saying nothing but not missing a thing. The citizens of Broken Lance were lined up to sell property of dubious title to Waggoner. Whatever they received for the land was clear profit, they reckoned. When they had settled on it, it had not belonged to anyone. There was just as free land to be had for the taking a few miles away from Broken Lance.

Waggoner's honesty cost him the purchase of a few pieces, however. He insisted on telling everyone that the railroad was coming to Broken Lance, and some of the wise ones prudently decided to hold their property.

At ten minutes after twelve, the Barat Brothers stormed into the saloon. Jeff Barat's face was dark with ill concealed anger; his brother kept himself better in hand, but his face was stiff.

"Hold everything!" Jeff Barat cried out. "Waggoner's not the only one here who's buying property. I'll pay twice the amount that he's paying for anything in Broken Lance or within five miles. And we're paying all cash!"

The saloon exploded. Someone fired a gun into the floor and a half dozen other citizens of Broken Lance promptly followed his example. Everyone whooped and shouted.

"I guess that finishes us," Tom Waggoner said to Bonniwell.

Bonniwell shrugged. His mind wasn't really on this, at all. He was thinking of the two girls from the East. Eleanor Simmons probably believed that the discharging of the guns meant a killing.

"You own about enough, don't you?" he asked of Tom Waggoner.

Waggoner shrugged. "More than half of the actual real estate of the town as it now is, and about a thousand acres of land nearby. But the big acreage hasn't been touched yet. The man who gets Ollie Simmons' ranch will hold the key to Broken Lance."

"Can you buy his place?"

Waggoner laughed shortly. "That depends. If money's required, no. You don't know him, do you?"

"No. But—the girl who came on the stage with us, Eleanor Simmons, she's Ollie's niece. Come to live with him."

Waggoner whistled. "Why'd he ever let her come here? His place's not the sort you'd want to bring a girl to? You know how he got his start?"

"I've heard he's called One Percent."

"Yeah, he got the name by taking a toll of one percent from all the trail herds that passed here. And you know your Texas trail riders, John."

"I know them," said Bonniwell. His mouth twisted briefly. "It's hard to believe that *anyone* could cut their herds."

"Ollie Simmons could. He's got half the thieves and killers in Kansas on his ranch."

Bonniwell wondered what Eleanor Simmons would think when she reached

her uncle's ranch, when she learned the truth about him.

"Well, if we're finished for tonight, Tom," he said, "I think I'll get a room and turn in."

"Me, too. We can't compete against the sort of money the Barats are shell-ing out."

All of Broken Lance, it seemed, was crowded about the Barat brothers. They paused at the edge of the swirling crowd and heard a town lot being sold for five hundred dollars.

"They're going to need a lot of money at the rate they're buying," said Waggoner, as they went out to the little cubbyhole that served as the hotel lobby.

They engaged two rooms on the second floor, mere alcoves with thin planks for walls.

CHAPTER VIII

LAW MAN



BONNIWELL rose before nine, which was early for Broken Lance. But oddly, the town was awake and active. He guessed that it hadn't really gone to bed the night before. Across the street in the restaurant, he discovered that his guess was correct.

The Barats were here. They were at a round table, eating breakfast and at the same time dickering with a couple of roughly dressed men. When Bonniwell got a small table near the window, Jeff Barat left his brother to continue the bargaining and came and sat down opposite Bonniwell.

"Ran a shindy on me, huh, Bonniwell?" he said.

"I don't get you."

"I asked you twice yesterday to throw in with me. You said you'd think it over. All the time you were planning to get the edge on me, with that partner of yours, the damn railroad—"

"Barat!" Bonniwell cut him off. "Tom Waggoner's my best friend."

"What of it?" snapped Jeff Barat. "He's usin' his job with the railroad to clean up here—"

"How did *you* get the information about Broken Lance?" Bonniwell asked

quietly. "Did you just *guess* the railroad was coming here?"

"My brother's been interested in railroads for years," said Jeff. "He's been associated with the big men, Vanderbilt, Fisk, Gould—"

"I've read about him in the papers."

Barat put both his hands flat on the table in front of him. "Bonniwell, I'm going to talk turkey to you. My brother and I are going to be the big men around here. There's nothing can stop us. I told you yesterday, I liked your style and I'm saying it again. I can use a man like you. Throw in with me—"

"No," said Bonniwell.

For just a second Barat's face was unguarded and showed his thoughts. Then he got control of it again. He smiled thinly. "Sorry you can't see it that way, Bonniwell. Well, we can be friendly competitors, eh?"

"Not competitors—or friends."

Barat got up. "What are you trying to do, pick a fight with me?"

"Not at all. Only you've been trying to force yourself upon me and I prefer to pick my own friends. That's putting it plainly."

Barat's face got white. His hands, hanging at his sides, clenched and unclenched. Then suddenly he turned and went back to his brother's table.

The waitress came to Bonniwell's table, but before he could give his order Tom Waggoner came in, with Lou Sager on his arm.

Bonniwell stared at Lou Sager. Heretofore he had seen her only in traveling clothes, her face dull from fatigue. Now she was refreshed, bright-eyed and sparkling. And she was wearing a dress that would have attracted attention at the Planters Hotel in St. Louis.

She saw his eyes regarding her. "Like it?"

He nodded. "It's very becoming."

"I made it myself. I make all my clothes."

Waggoner helped her into a chair. That brought him facing the window. He exclaimed. "There's Ollie Simmons!"

Bonniwell frowned slightly. "Do you mind? I want to see someone at the hotel."

He saw the question in Lou Sager's

eyes, but bowed and left the restaurant. He walked casually across the street to the Broken Lance Hotel. There were a dozen horses in front of it, also a buckboard, evidently intended for the transportation of Ollie Simmons' niece.

Ollie Simmons and his riders had already gone inside. Bonniwell heard them in the saloon and walked in. Jack McSorley with a glass at his lips saw him and whooped.

"John Bonniwell!"

He grabbed Bonniwell's hand and pumped it. "So they didn't get you, after all. I told them five or six Texas men couldn't do it!" He whirled. "Ollie, this is John Bonniwell!"



OLLIE SIMMONS was as much like a grizzly bear as a human could be. He was six feet four, almost four feet broad at the shoulders and had a fierce black beard that came down to his chest. His hands were enormous. Bonniwell had to steel himself against the tremendous pressure of the handshake.

"Glad to shake your hand, Bonniwell!" boomed Simmons. "Provided you're not figurin' on takin' the job of marshal of Broken Lance."

Jack McSorley, who was only two inches less in height than his employer Simmons, roared at that. "Be too bad for us if he did, huh, Ollie?"

There was a glitter in Ollie Simmons' eyes, and less good humor in his tone when he replied. "It might be a bit o' trouble, at that."

A slight, wiry man edged around from behind Ollie Simmons' huge bulk. He was clean shaven except for a black mustache, and his face bore absolutely no expression. But Bonniwell got a glimpse of the pale, washed-out blue eyes and brought his gaze back upon them.

"Coe's my name, Russ Coe," the man said. He made no move to shake hands. "I guess you knew a friend o' mine—Pete Vinson."

Bonniwell remembered Vinson. He had drawn against Bonniwell in the early days of Haleyville. He had never met Russ Coe before, but knew of him by reputation and knew that a more cold-blooded man did not live in all of Kansas.

"Yes, I remember Vinson," he replied. "Why?"

Jack McSorley reached out with a big hand and placed it on Russ Coe's chest. "None of that, now, Russ. Bonniwell's a friend of mine."

"Is he?" said Coe, without taking his eyes off Bonniwell.

The Barats, storming into the saloon, broke the tension.

"Ollie Simmons, I want to talk to you," Jeff Barat announced.

Ollie Simmons hunched his huge shoulders.

"Don't know's I want to listen to you, Barat," he rumbled. "I ain't forgotten the last time I talked to you. It was about four aces!"

"I don't remember!" snapped Jeff Barat. "So it couldn't have been important. *This* is. Meet my brother, Ferdinand. He's one of the biggest men in Wall Street. I told him this was a good spot to invest some of his idle capital, so—"

Bonniwell went out. He almost collided with Eleanor Simmons, standing in the little hotel lobby. She was looking into the saloon, as if she didn't quite dare go in.

She was very pale today and Bonniwell was sure that her chin was trembling a little. Her eyes met his and he saw the pain in them. He'd resolved not to intrude himself upon her again, but he couldn't help himself now. "Your uncle know you're here?"

She shook her head and her eyes became suddenly bright with tears. "I—which one is my uncle?"

He turned to look back into the saloon. "The big one with the beard. I'll tell him you're here."

He went back into the saloon and signaled to Ollie Simmons. When he caught his eye he jerked his head toward Eleanor, in the lobby. Simmons saw the girl; in the middle of a violent denunciation of Jeff Barat, he brushed past the gambler.

He went right to Eleanor and wrapped her in a big bear embrace. Bonniwell, on his way out of the hotel, saw Eleanor flinch from her uncle.

He went back to the restaurant across the street. Waggoner and Lou Sager were almost finished with their breakfast.

"I understand you and Tom have become big real estate men overnight," Lou flashed at Bonniwell as he sat down.

"There are a couple of fellows who are bigger," Bonniwell replied. He grinned at Tom Waggoner. "The Barats are trying to give Ollie Simmons the rush act, but Ollie isn't very friendly. He remembers something about four aces that Jeff Barat once pulled on him."

"That's fine!" exclaimed Waggoner. "While I don't consider Ollie Simmons an asset to the country, for the time being I prefer that he remain in *status quo*. He'll act as a sort of buffer between us and the Barats."

Bonniwell was thoughtful. "Barat's got something up his sleeve, Tom. He's a handy man with a gun himself, but he's biting off a pretty big mouthful if he tries to tackle Ollie Simmons by himself. What's this town got in the way of law, Tom?"

"None. The county seat is Baker. One of the first things we've got to do is form a company or town council. I was intending to talk to the business men about that this morning."

"That's my hint to leave," said Lou Sager. She pushed back her chair, but paused. "Tom has just rented me a store. I've got to figure out what fixtures and supplies I'll need." Her eyes were on Bonniwell's face, quite evidently seeking approbation for her venture. But Bonniwell didn't give it to her.

His eyes were slightly narrowed and he grinned in an absent-minded manner. The color rose in Lou Sager's face. She smiled at Tom Waggoner, rose quickly and left the restaurant.

"She's really going to open a millinery store?" Bonniwell asked of Waggoner then.

"Of course. You and I started the land boom last night. By tomorrow the news will be in Baker. You'll see a stampede to Broken Lance. And in a month, when the railroad comes here, this town will be headquarters for the southwest. I'm quitting my job with the railroad."

"Why, Tom?"

Waggoner shrugged. "Won't be able to do justice to it. Besides, anyone can carry on the railroad work from now. It's been a good job, but I figure a man's

got to try to better himself when he gets the opportunity. And this is my opportunity."

"She's a plucky girl," said Bonniwell.

Waggoner grinned. "I've got my eye on her. I'm betting she makes a go of it."



AFTER breakfast Bonniwell went to the hotel and sat down on a chair on the veranda. Tom Waggoner left him to talk to various business men. He came back for Bonniwell shortly after eleven. "Havin' a meeting in Hudkins' store, John. Come along."

Almost a dozen of the town's leading citizens were gathered in Josh Hudkins' store when they got there. They'd already been discussing things.

When Bonniwell came in with Waggoner, Josh Hudkins held up his hands for quiet.

"Mr. Waggoner," he said, "we been talkin' things over and we decided that seein's how you're really makin' Broken Lance, you ought to be the first mayor. What say?"

Tom Waggoner smiled boyishly. "Why, I appreciate the compliment, gentlemen, but for certain reasons I'd rather not be the head of Broken Lance's civic body. I'll be glad, however, to assist in drawing up a charter and a city constitution. I helped with the drafting of the one that Baker's now using. I think—" his eyes ran quickly over the crowd—"Mr. Hudkins would make as fine a mayor as we could get."

There was spirited applause at that suggestion. But before anyone could comment on the selection, the door of the store opened and the two Barats came into the store. They seemed to have an uncanny knack for finding out what was going on.

This time bluff Ferdinand Barat took the lead.

"Gentlemen," he said in his rich baritone voice, "I believe you're gathered here to form a town company. I have a suggestion to make. My brother Jeff has been in Kansas for years. He is familiar with civic government in a dozen towns like Broken Lance. Incidentally, he has invested heavily in local real estate and

as the man from whom you will expect to obtain the largest share of your taxes with which to run this government he should be reckoned with. I propose Jeff Barat as your choice for mayor."

"Hooray!" one man yelled. John Bonniwell's sharp eyes found the man instantly and made a note of him.

But silence lingered over the others. The crowd needed a leader. Tom Waggoner was the man. "You heard my own endorsement a moment ago, gentlemen. Very well, you've two candidates now. Why don't you vote on them?"

"All those in favor of Jeff Barat for mayor say 'aye,'" John Bonniwell said.

"Hooray!" yelled the solitary supporter of Jeff Barat.

"Those in favor of Josh Hudkins?"

There was no question about that. Bonniwell was watching the faces of the Barats, saw the anger that swept across them. But still they did not withdraw. Ferdinand Barat, in fact, smiled ingratiatingly.

"No hard feelings," he assured the men in the store.

He passed out cigars. So the least they could do, when they got to it, was to elect Jeff Barat to the city council, which consisted of seven men. The other six were: Mayor Hudkins, Ferd Barat, Tom Waggoner, "Beak" Nelson, Doug Fletcher and Charley Sheidler.

Bert Fowler was appointed secretary of the city company. It was voted to employ a city marshal who would, in turn hire deputies as they were needed when the town grew. As there were no funds in the city treasury at the moment, everyone of the sixteen men present contributed a hundred dollars. That required the election of a city treasurer and Ben Hutton was elected to the post. Hutton was the faro dealer at the Golden Prairie Saloon.

When the meeting broke up, Josh Hudkins detained Waggoner and Bonniwell.

"Mr. Bonniwell," he said, "you know what this town's going to be like in a few days. Another Baker and Haleyville. I know what you did in those towns and I want you as city marshal."

Bonniwell shook his head. "I'm sorry, Mr. Hudkins. I never want to have to use my guns again."

"We've got an early start in this town," Waggoner said. "If we keep it tight, we can retain control of it. I'm in favor of getting a strong law enforcement body. But knowing John's attitude toward such a job, I think we'd better look elsewhere."

"But who'll we get?"

"I don't know," replied Waggoner. "But it should be the best man available for the job. Why not try to get Wild Bill Hickok?"

"He's in Hays City. They're paying him pretty high there. We couldn't meet it. There was a young fellow here a few months ago, I figure would make a swell marshal. But I don't know where I can locate him. He's a buffalo hunter. Name of Wyatt Earp."

"He's a mighty good man," said John Bonniwell. "If you can persuade him to become a peace officer, you'll have the man you want."

"Isn't Lee Thompson in town?" asked Waggoner. "I thought I saw him in the saloon last night."

Hudkins scowled. "Yes, he's here. In fact, he killed Ike Bailey last week. I dunno. Lee's pretty fancy with a gun for me."

"You need a man who's as tough as the toughest, as fast as the fastest. Sure, Thompson's a killer—but can you get along without a killer here?"



OLLIE SIMMONS, by the simple process of taking them, was the owner of five thousand acres of the finest buffalo grass range in Southern Kansas. He was the only cattle king in Kansas.

He had left Illinois in 1858, after selling a fairly prosperous mercantile business, against the advice of his older and steadier brother.

He headed west. At St. Joe, Missouri, he hired out as an ordinary teamster and drove a six mule team to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There he joined a wagon train bound for San Francisco.

Adventure, more than the lure of gold, kept him in the golden state for two or three years. He roamed the mining camps and enjoyed himself more than he ever had in his life.

Somehow he drifted up to Oregon, at

the time when the Montana gold camps were drawing thousands of men from the Pacific Coast. He was at Virginia City and Alder Gulch when Henry Plummer and his amazingly well organized band of "road agents" were terrorizing the mining camps. Simmons became a member of the vigilantes which eventually hanged Plummer and more than thirty of the road agents.

He clawed a few thousand dollars worth of dust from the gold canyons, but it wasn't enough to hold him. He sold his claim and traveled overland to St. Joe, Missouri, from which he had started out, several years before.

A glib scoundrel from Michigan talked Simmons into sinking all his money into a wagon train headed for Denver. The savage guerrilla warfare was at its height along the Missouri-Kansas border. The train took a more northerly and westerly route than ordinarily to avoid the guerrillas, and should have got through safely.

Except that the Michigan man sold them out.

One morning a band of guerrillas rode out of a patch of woods near the camp of the wagon train and calmly took the wagons away from the teamsters. Resistance was useless; there were forty men in the band. The teamsters were lucky to escape with their lives. The Michigan man rode off with the raiders.

That experience decided Ollie Simmons upon his eventual cause. He liked this country. For six years he had traveled all over the West and had not liked any section as well as this. He had always been in the other man's territory. He decided to make a territory of his own.

Four of the jobless teamsters threw in their lot with him. They helped Simmons build a small fort here on the prairie. They formed the nucleus of a group that eventually numbered almost fifty. Ollie Simmons had been robbed by Kansans. Very well, he would get back from Kansas what he had lost. By the gun, as it had been taken from him.

He robbed emigrant trains, and called it "toll". He built a stronghold on the prairie and gathered about him the roughest, toughest retainers the country produced. When they stopped a wagon

train and said the toll was one percent, the freighters protested only verbally. A few tried it with guns and did not fare so well.

Then the war was over between the states, and a venturing Texas cattle man tried to drive a herd of a thousand Longhorn steers over mountains and desert and plains to Illinois. At the Missouri border, ruffians and thieves stampeded the Texan's herd. When the cattleman came to round them up he could not locate a quarter of the animals. He tried again to cross the border and a frontier sheriff turned him back, with the curt order that Texas cattle could not cross into Missouri. The ruffians on the back-trail again stampeded the herd, killed a cowboy and ran off with two hundred more head of cattle.

Discouraged, the Texan retreated with his reduced herd. Ollie Simmons offered to get him through to Missouri. The Texan assented gladly. Simmons' redoubtable force delivered a crushing defeat to the border ruffians. Then they intimidated the sheriff who had previously refused to let the herd into Missouri. The Texan sold the cattle in Joplin, Missouri at a very satisfactory price and then learned to his chagrin that Simmons wanted for his services one-half of the proceeds. The Texan could do nothing else but pay. Counting up he learned that he had actually collected money for only two hundred of the thousand head of Longhorns with which he had first reached Kansas.

Not that it made much difference. The Texan went to a Joplin gambling house and in a single night lost every cent he had. He was on the verge of blowing out his brains when Ollie Simmons made him a proposition.

He gave the Texan the four thousand dollars he had received as his share of the cattle sale, plus an additional two thousand dollars. He told the cattleman to return to Texas, buy as many steers as he could for the six thousand dollars and bring them to Kansas. He, Ollie Simmons, would see that they got to market from there.

To safeguard his investment, Ollie Simmons sent two of his own men with the Texas cattleman.



IT WAS the best thing Simmons had ever done in his life. Texas steers, at home, had a hide and tallow value of \$3.00, and it was a bother to skin the animal and render the carcass to tallow. At an average of \$4.00, Simmons' emissary bought 1500 of the best beeves in Texas. He gathered together a crew and brought them to Kansas; from there Simmons took them through hostile territory to Springfield, Missouri, where they brought \$22.00 a head.

When Simmons reached his home range he discovered to his amazement that two thousand Texas steers were grazing on his own land. With them were twenty-five Texas cowboys, ready, willing and able to defend the herd.

Simmons had to let them pass. He did, however, elicit from this outfit the information that two or three additional herds were expected to make the overland trip. By the time the next one reached the vicinity of Simmons' stronghold, the border chief had recruited additional fighting men.

Simmons bluntly told the drover that the toll for crossing Simmons' land was five percent of his herd. The drover gave fight. He had a dozen men. After casualties, Simmons offered a truce, at one percent. The drover paid it.

Simmons discovered that if he showed strength the drovers would stand for a one percent tax. More than that, though, they would fight.

This was better than driving the herds yourself, risking your money. Simmons' men ranged the prairies for fifty or sixty miles. A couple of his men were often sufficient to force payment of the toll. A cattle herd moved slowly. Drovers came to know that if they repelled the toll collectors, it would invariably mean the arrival of Simmons' entire fighting force inside of twenty-four hours.

In 1867 Abilene came into existence. Simmons collected from the herds that passed near his ranch and turned northeast. He extracted toll from the drovers who took their steers to Caldwell and Hays City, to Newton and Baker.

He took the toll in cattle. He fattened them on his range, and when he needed money for his crew, he drove a small

herd to railhead. Buyers and commission men from Chicago and Kansas City were commoner than bartenders in the trail towns. You could sell a herd in five minutes, and get your money right away.

A settler built a store one day, out on the prairie, figuring to get some business from Texas men before they reached the towns farther north. Simmons didn't mind. He and his men patronized the store. Soon there was a saloon. Then another store. And overnight, Broken Lance.

About this time, he received a letter from his brother in Illinois, telling of the long illness of his daughter, Eleanor, a girl Ollie remembered as a child of seven or eight. Ollie, affluent now and playing with the thought of respectability, wrote his brother to send the girl.

She came, and when he saw her, he knew that it was a mistake. She was unlike the few women he'd known out in this country. Eleanor was decidedly a product of civilization.

But if he was disturbed by Eleanor, the latter was even more disconcerted by Ollie Simmons. Her father was a respected doctor in a quiet Illinois village. He was poor, but he was educated and refined. Whatever refinement her uncle might once have had, had vanished with his years in the West.

There were seven or eight wild looking men in the party that rode out to the Simmons Ranch. A few rode in advance of the buckboard and a few behind. Her uncle rode with her and tried to make conversation.

"Too bad Roland won't come out here. If he did he'd make more money in a year than he'll make in Benton in ten. This country needs a good doctor."

"I don't believe father's interested in money," Eleanor defended her father.

Ollie Simmons snorted. "That's why he's always been so damned poor. Why, I remember when I was in Benton myself. Half his patients never paid him at all, and the other half gave him chickens and hogs and garden truck. I don't think Roland got any hard money in a month."

Her uncle's statement was painfully true. Her father still never sent a patient a bill. He accepted whatever they could pay.

She said to her uncle: "Father's not at all well. I think he ought to visit this country for awhile himself."

"Try and get him to leave that precious Benton," exclaimed Ollie Simmons. "Why, I sent him money last year to come out and stay with me. He sent the money back."

"I remember," Eleanor said quietly.

"He's poor, huh? Well, so was I, ten years ago, Eleanor. Do you know how much I'm worth today?"

"No, I don't, but—a man told me you were one of the wealthiest men in this country."

"He didn't lie. I own twenty thousand head of cattle and five thousand acres of land."

And then they came in sight of the ranch buildings. From a distance they were disappointing. They seemed to be a mere cluster of flimsy shacks, but when they approached Eleanor saw that the main house was built of logs.

A Negress, so fat she could scarcely waddle, was awaiting them in front of the house.

"Ah's Emily," she introduced herself. "An' ah's sho' glad to have a lady comin' to this-yeah house."

The inside of the house, Eleanor discovered, was scrupulously clean, although far too rough and mannish. Chairs were straight-backed. There were no curtains, no pictures on the walls, none of the little touches about a house that a woman liked.

Her uncle showed her about the house and said, "Write down what you think we need, and we'll order it from Kansas City or St. Louis."

Eleanor protested, "But I'm only here on a visit. You don't have to buy a single thing extra for me."

Ollie Simmons took her arm gruffly. "You're stayin' here for quite a spell. You can help me by getting this place furnished like it should be. Uh—some-thin' like the houses back in Illinois."

"That would cost a lot of money."

"Money?" Ollie Simmons laughed shortly. "I told you I was the richest man in these parts. An' I'm goin' to be richer in a few years. I figure to own a hundred thousand head of cattle some day."



DINNER was served in the kitchen at a plain, uncovered table. Eleanor ate with her uncle and two of the men who had been to town with him, Jack McSorley and Russ Coe.

"The other boys have a special shack for eatin'," her uncle explained.

"They eat with their knives," said Russ Coe.

Ollie Simmons looked sharply at Coe, but the latter kept his eyes down on his plate. Jack McSorley, who had shaved and slicked down his hair, since Eleanor had seen him last, sat stiffly at the table. He spoke only when her uncle addressed him. He was the first to leave the table.

After dinner, Ollie Simmons went out to look after some things and Eleanor followed him to the veranda, where she sat down to look over the ranch yard.

She was there when Russ Coe came casually from around the rear of the house.

"A little class is what this place's been needing," he said.

Eleanor had been thinking just before Coe showed up, what attitude she should take toward the men on the ranch. It was a problem that had not occurred to her until she had observed Coe and McSorley at the dinner table.

She looked coolly at Coe. "Class?"

He grinned. "Yeah—somethin' like you."

Eleanor cocked her head to one side. "Mr. Coe, my uncle neglected to tell me. Just what is your position on this ranch?"

Russ Coe's grin faded away. "I'm a sort of foreman."

"Oh, then you're a very busy man. I understand there's an enormous amount of work to be done every day." Eleanor's eyes left Coe's face and looked toward the corrals beyond. It was so blunt and obvious that Coe couldn't help but get it.

He stiffened, muttered something under his breath and clumped away. At one of the bunkhouses, a hundred feet away, he turned and looked back at Eleanor.

It wasn't the most tactful thing for Eleanor to do, but she knew Russ Coe was the sort of man she must squelch

right at the start, or suffer endless annoyance from him in the days to come.

An hour or so later, Jack McSorley came upon a small group of cowboys, chuckling over some things Russ Coe was telling them. McSorley heard only the tail end of a remark: "... a high-toned lady. We're gonna have to remember we're only poor white trash!"

McSorley caught Russ Coe's arm and whirled him around.

"That's the last time you'll ever even mention her around here!" he snarled. "Understand that, Coe?"

Coe sneered at the big foreman. He half turned to the cowboys and appealed to them, in ridicule. "Jack's fallen for—"

And then McSorley hit him, a pile-driving blow that smashed Coe back against the bunks. He fell to the floor on his knees. From that position he looked up at McSorley. There was a gun in the foreman's hand.

"I mean it, Coe," said McSorley. "One word and I'll kill you!"

Russ Coe knew it. He made a tremendous effort and forced a smile. "I was only jokin'."



THE next morning at breakfast Eleanor timidly produced some sheets of paper. "I've made a list of some things we might get, Uncle Oliver."

"Fine. Take it in to Josh Hudkins in Broken Lance. What he hasn't got he'll order for you."

"How'll I get to town? If I had a riding dress and a side-saddle I could ride."

Her uncle frowned. "Never saw a woman riding a horse around here. If you don't mind, use the buckboard. I'll have Mose drive you."

Mose was Emily's husband. He did odd jobs around the ranch. He was a strapping Negro who had been a slave only a few years ago.

He brought the team of horses and the buckboard around to the house. Then Ollie Simmons came out and spoke to Eleanor.

"Been thinkin' it over. Broken Lance is going to be a tough town from now on. I'll feel better if you have one of the boys ride with you whenever you go in. Russ Coe—"

"Russ Coe's a gun-fighter, isn't he?" Eleanor asked.

Her uncle spread his palms upward. "He's handy with a gun."

"Would you mind—could it be somebody else?"

"Jack sent all the boys out this mornin', but I guess he could go with you himself."

In that way Jack McSorley became Eleanor's escort on her trips to Broken Lance. He rode his horse in the rear of the buckboard. He did not speak to her except when she addressed him.

Eleanor spent two hours with Josh Hudkins. When she was finished, Mose had loaded the buckboard high with things and Eleanor had made further arrangements to have a wagon-load of things delivered to the ranch.

It was noon when she was ready to go home. Knowing that it would take them an hour and a half to reach the ranch, Eleanor gave Mose a half dollar. "Buy yourself some lunch, somewhere," she told the Negro.

His grin reached to both ears. "Yassum, Miss Simmons, thank yuh!" He whirled and rushed across the street to a door over which was a sign, "Saloon."

On her way to the restaurant where she had eaten breakfast the day before Eleanor passed a small store and caught sight of a bright colored gingham dress swirling about inside. She looked a second time and recognized Lou Sager, a bandana handkerchief about her head, busy with a broom.

She went in.

"So you're really going to start a store?" she commented, smilingly.

"My order's already in St. Louis," Lou Sager replied. "I expect to be open for business inside of a week. And you—how'd you find the ranch?"

"It's enormous. I've been buying some things for the house. I think I'm going to like it out here."

"So'm I. Tom—Mr. Waggoner, whom you know, says this is going to be one of the most important towns in the state. He expects a tremendous boom. You'll notice that the population has already doubled in two days. Where they came from no one knows. Mr. Waggoner bought some of the property around

here and then the Barats began out-bidding him on everything."

Eleanor couldn't help but note the constant references to "Mr. Waggoner" and "Tom". She smiled. "Will you have lunch with me, Miss Sager?"

"I will—if you won't call me Miss Sager. My name's Lou."

"And mine's Eleanor!"

They were scarcely seated in the restaurant than Tom Waggoner came in. He greeted them with his usual enthusiasm. "I saw you come in. I left several prospective land-buyers to join you."

"Oh, but you shouldn't have!" exclaimed Eleanor.

He grinned. "It's all right. I'm not selling land. I'm buying."

Jeff Barat coming into the restaurant at that moment heard the last of Waggoner's remark.

"You've bought too much land, Mr. Waggoner," he said. "You've beat me out on some choice parcels."

"Do you mind very much?"

Jeff Barat smiled pleasantly. "No, not much. All right if I join you and the ladies at lunch?"

"Of course," said Eleanor. Lou Sager smiled, a bit thinly. Waggoner wasn't any too cordial to Jeff Barat, but the gambler did not mind. He was fully capable of carrying the conversation all by himself, and he did. Eleanor got practically no chance to talk to Lou Sager, whom she wanted to know more intimately.

Later, when she was climbing into the wagon and Mose was turning the team, she saw John Bonniwell walking by on the sidewalk. He nodded to her and tipped his hat. She flashed him a tardy smile. And thought about him, then, half the way to the ranch.

CHAPTER IX

BOOM TOWN



ONE day Broken Lance was a sleepy hamlet along the Chisholm Trail, the next it was a roaring boom town. The hundred yard Main Street stretched out to a half mile, and four cross streets were cut

into the town. From morning to late at night the streets were a mass of moving wagons, men, horses and mules.

Stages came in twice a day from Baker. But freight wagons, covered wagons came in every hour. And in between, men on horses and mules raced one another, to be the first to get what was coming to Broken Lance.

Tent stores popped up everywhere. Everywhere hammers rang and saws buzzed. Claptrap buildings went up. Where the lumber came from no one seemed to know.

But suddenly it was there, a regular lumber yard and busy twenty-four hours of the day.

Tom Waggoner opened an office in the lobby of the Golden Prairie saloon. Two days later he moved to a building that had just gone up across the street. Somewhere he found a man who could do clerical work and employed him. Then he was able to spend his time outside. All the tent stores that went up, all the false fronted frame shacks, owed their existence to Tom Waggoner.

He did not sell a single town lot, but he leased them. It was a strange way of doing business, but the newcomers agreed to everything.

No one questioned the legality of the election that had made Josh Hudkins mayor of Broken Lance. Everyone was too busy making money and spending it.

The mayor thought it over a day and then employed Lee Thompson as marshal of the town. Thompson was a cold-eyed, lean man of about twenty-five. He had a reputation that was known in three states. Before the end of the week he employed Joe Boots, a half-breed buffalo skinner, as deputy marshal.

Lou Sager's store was ready in three days. Three days later her merchandise came; a couple of hundred ready made hats, materials for making more. When she had come to Broken Lance there had been two in the town. At the end of the first week there were two hundred.

They came with the saloons, of which there were now sixteen. A doctor arrived in town the second week and found plenty of work.

Bonniwell watched Broken Lance grow up around him and he didn't like it. When Waggoner moved to the building across the street from the Golden Prairie Saloon he moved with him. There was a partition at the back of the store, behind which they set up cots. But there was no window in back and it was too gloomy to remain out of sight all day. So Bonniwell was compelled to spend much of his time either in the front office or out on the street. He preferred the street.

He was the only drone in Broken Lance. Everyone else seemed to have plenty to do. So he saw Broken Lance develop. He got to know by sight almost every newcomer to the city. He saw every building go up and he became a little quieter every day, if that were possible.

Jeff Barat bought the Broken Lance Saloon and Dance Hall. It developed that he already owned the two buildings next door. He tore out the walls between, patched up the front and made of the three stores the largest building in town. And almost all of the first floor he converted into a saloon and dance hall. Sections were added to the bar until it was seventy-five feet long, running along the entire rear of the big building. Jeff publicly threw away the key to the front door.

"This place is open twenty-four hours a day!" he declared.

He divided his time between the saloon and his brother's office in the Barat building across the street. This was a new building, a rather solidly constructed one, but built with tremendous speed. Ferd Barat seldom left it once he moved

in. Bonniwell, passing every day, saw new desks installed regularly, new employees added. He saw the sign hung out which read "Barat Brothers Bank of Broken Lance. Real Estate. Loans."

A man put a chair outside the bank and sat there from morning until late at night. He was a squat, swarthy individual of about thirty. His name was Mike Slingerland. When Ferd Barat came briefly out of the bank to get his meals, Slingerland left his chair and followed the banker.

Bonniwell gambled moderately. Usually he patronized the Golden Prairie Saloon, but when the huge new place of Jeff Barat was opened for business he went there to see what it was like. He had a drink at the bar, wandered idly around. Bonniwell noted at least a dozen men in the throng who did not play, who stood near each game with hands near their guns. One was seated openly on a raised platform overlooking the faro layout, which normally received the biggest play.

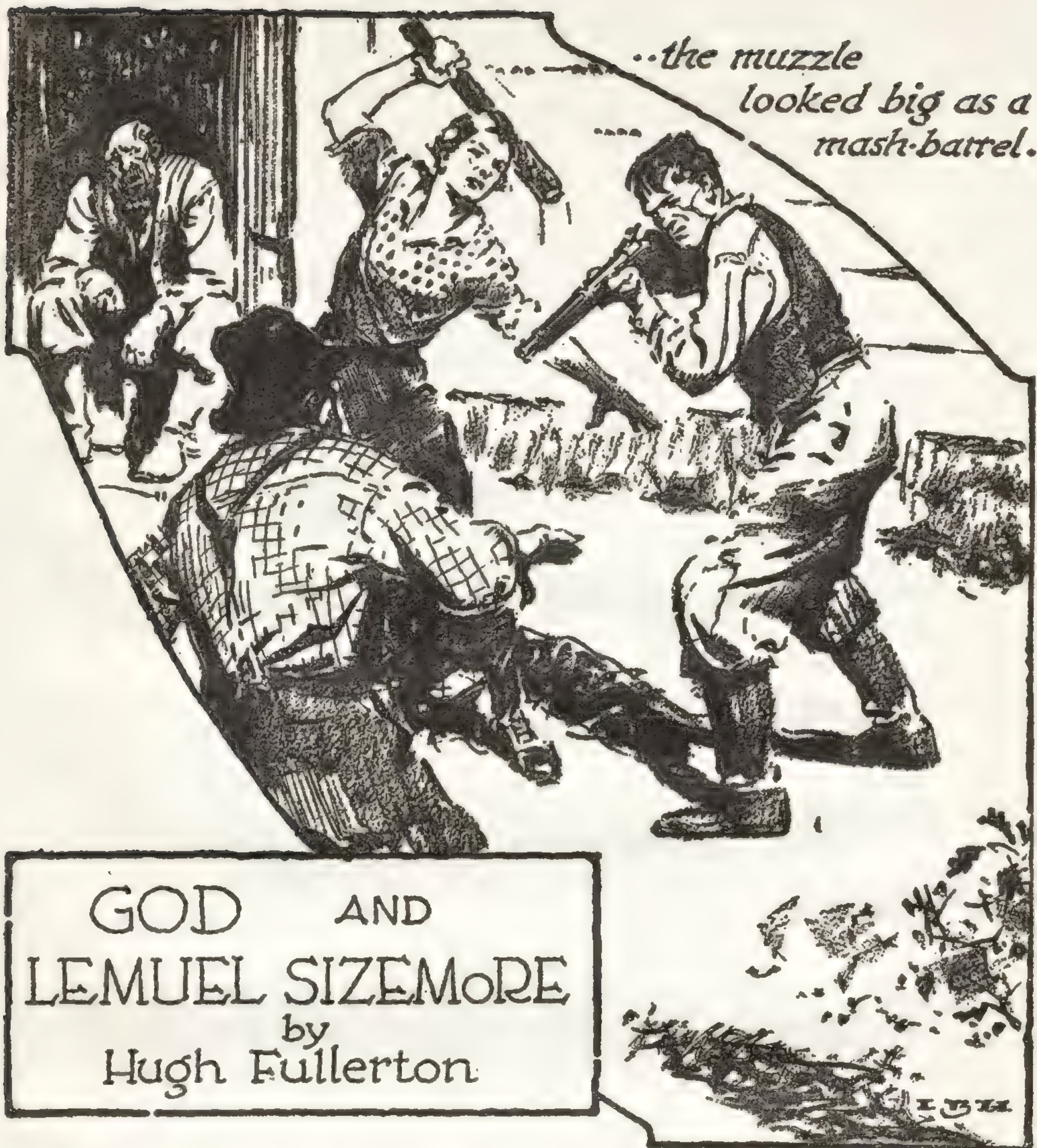
Even before his brother had a body-guard, Jeff Barat acquired a shadow, a gun-fighter named Kelso, who had an unsavory reputation.

Bonniwell believed him to be a horse thief and highwayman.

And then a train of wagons accompanied by two hundred wild Irishmen came to Broken Lance. It was the advance guard of the railroad. From then on Broken Lance was never the same. A railroad station sprang up in a single day, loading pens the next. A few days later Broken Lance citizens began riding out to watch the grading and the laying of the track.

(To be continued)





GOD AND LEMUEL SIZEMORE

by
Hugh Fullerton

LINK TATUM entered the store of Anse Groves hastily, slamming the door shut with a force that rattled the front windows. The pursuing gust of sharp autumn wind swept back through the store, making the flame in the big bracket lamp suspended from the ceiling flutter and becloud the chimney. As though baffled in the effort to follow him, the gale shook the door violently and went howling up the narrow confines of Hominy Cove into the gap between Iron and Clabber Mountains.

Breathing rapidly, Link glanced back anxiously into the darkness before slowing his gait as he moved toward the

group of men and boys sitting around the stove.

"Bringin' lots of outside inside this evenin', Link," remarked Anse Groves. "Hooty owls been scairin' you?"

"Hit takes more'n hooty owls to skeer me."

"You're pantin' like a trailin' hound. Bin runnin'?"

"Runned clear from the holler up by the buryin' ground."

"Ghost follerin' you?" inquired Bill Penald.

"Worse'n a ghost. I bin a-talkin' to Lem Sizemore."

There was a sudden uneasy shifting of positions among the loafers around the stove at mention of the name.

"Lem on the warpath agin?" asked Anse Groves, after the pause.

"I ain't skeert of Lem Sizemore," Link stated unconvincingly. "Lem's plum peaceable."

"Then what skeert you?" insisted Mose Lantry.

"I hain't hankerin' to converse with no one that claims he's bin a-talkin' with God. Lem's talkin' queer."

"How come?"

"I hain't a-talkin' none about Lem," Link decided suddenly. "Gimme a nicke's worth of eatin' terbaccar, Anse. I'm mindin' my own business."

"Fine cut er plug?" inquired Anse.

"Gimme fine cut."

"Hain't got no fine cut."

"Gimme plug, then, consarn hit and quit foolishness."

Link preempted space on a bench and sat down. An uneasy silence fell upon the group ringed around the stove. Anse threw lumps of slaty hill coal into the glowing fire box, poked into the fire with an iron, shoved a reluctant hound dog further from the stove and climbed to a seat on the counter.

"Lem aimin' this way, Link?" he inquired, artfully reopening the subject.

"Reckon so. He was meanderin'."

"Lookin' fer Crawleys?"

"Hain't no Crawleys down from the Bone this evenin'. Lem's peaceable. Hain't carryin' his shootin' iron."

"Lem not totin' his rifle gun?"

A note of surprise and unbelief came into Anse's voice and a movement of doubt into the attitudes of the listeners.

"Lem's changed," said Link in half awed tones. "He's been a-talkin' with God. He tolt me and that skeert me."

"Lem Sizemore talkin' with God?" Bill Penald repeated. "You reckon Lem's losin' his reason?"

"Talked plumb solemn."

"Lem hain't no liar," asserted Bill Penald positively. "He's onrier'n red gum firewood, but iffen Lem ventures he's bin a-talkin' with God I hain't contradictin'."

"Skeert me," Link confessed. "And I hain't easy skeert. Lem hain't a-funnin', and the way he talked I hain't a-laughin'."

"You reckon Lem's bound thisaway?"

inquired Bob Mayson uneasily. "If so be, I'll be a-movin'."

"Keep sittin'," Anse commanded sharply. "Thar hain't no call to be fleein' from one that's talked with God. You mought meet Him up the cove."

That idea appeared to check the exodus from the store.

"You reckon anyone ever seen God?" asked Clem Huston, after a period of silence.

"I hain't doubtin' His miracles," replied Anse piously. "And I hain't doubtin' Lem's word. Only maybe he dremt it."

"That corn Lem swallers mought make him see things," asserted Luke Newsom.



THE front door opened again. A blast of chill wind swept through the smoke-fogged store. A man, raw-boned, powerful, his face solemn, entered quickly. There was a shuffling movement among the loafers around the stove and all eyes turned toward the newcomer with expressions in which were mingled awe and half fearful anticipation.

"Hyah, Lem," said Anse Groves with exaggerated unconcern. "Set and rest your feet. Anything you'll be requirin' this evenin'?"

"I'll tot side meat and meal and some trifles when I mosey. Payin' cash money."

"Credit's good, Lem, but cash money's always welcome. Middlin' sharp cold on the Bone this evenin'."

"Hain't took no heed," said Lem slowly. "Hain't noticin' weather when more solemn things is a-happenin'."

The sitters moved along the bench to make room for him and Lem seated himself, stretched his long arms toward the stove, holding his powerful hands palm outward toward the glowing fire. Anse Groves threw more coal into the stove and closed the door with a clang. Silence reigned as the men waited with tense expectancy. No one seemed desirous of opening the conversation.

"Chaw, Lem?" asked Link Tatum, extending his newly purchased plug of tobacco toward the newcomer.

"Nope. I'm foreswearin' the weed."

"You all quittin' chewin'?" exclaimed

Link, surprised out of his caution. "How 'bout smokin'?"

"I'm forswearin'. I done got the Word."

The listeners leaned forward expectantly.

"Heerd you had a experience," Anse confessed.

"Who the hell's bin a-talkin'?" demanded the big man.

"Link 'lowed he met you and you told him you bin conversin' with God. We 'lowed maybe you was funnin' him."

Link, in sudden alarm, slid further along the bench as Lem turned his steely blue eyes on him.

"Funnin' erbout God hain't funnin'," he said. "I tole Link I'd bin holdin' converse with God, but I hain't expectin' he be repeatin'."

"I warn't a-repeatin'. I war jist tellin' I seed you."

"Tellin's tellin'," asserted Lem. "Hain't stomachin' tattlers."

"You done seed God?" inquired Anse, anxious to avert trouble.

"I hain't exactly seed Him," said Lem solemnly. "Yit I seed His glory. I heerd His voice. I done helt converse with Him twicet this week and my life is changed. I'm a-forgiven' and atonin'. I hain't even a-goin' to fist beat Link fer talkin'."

Link, visibly relieved, ceased his sliding retreat along the bench.

"You forgivin' even them Crawleys?" asked Bill Penald doubtingly.

"Even them dam Crawleys—they especial. Feud's done ended."

"Hit's a miracle," said Ab Drake. "Parson oughta preach on hit."

"Hain't no need the parson preachin'. I'm gittin' up in church and a-testifyin' and a-tellin', come Sunday."

"You all a-goin' to meetin', Lem?" quavered Bill Penald, as if he had not heaved aright.

"I'm a-goin' to meetin' and I'm a-tellin' what happent me," said Lem solemnly.

"Hit's more'n a miracle. Hit's a re-bornin'," asserted Bill piously. "How come it happen, Lem?"



LEM crossed his legs, reached from habit into the rear pocket of his overalls for his plug of tobacco, remembered his reformation, and spoke.

"I was a-pokin' along down off the Bone come evenin' last Tuesday. The dogs was a-tonguin' along the side of Iron, above Hominy. I was seekin' a jug o' corn in a cave under the laurel, and when I uprooted it I holed up in the cave to listen to them hounds a-runnin' and a-singin'. The hate and the thirst were heavy on me. I was a-hopin' maybe some of them dam Crawleys mought be a-pesterin' around the mountin' disturbin' the peace, and I mought git a shot.

"I was a-thinkin' of Annie and a-hat-in' her folks. I upped the jug and drunk a couple of tins of corn, firin' the hate in my heart, and even the tonguin' of the dogs along the ridge failed to bring peace.

"Come evenin' the chill rose in the Gap. I poked me up a little fire in the cave and drunk some more of the corn until the hate commenst to ooze outen my hide and I was a-desirin' peace.

"I was a-sittin' with my back agin the wall of the cave, a-listenin' to the hounds, the comfortinest music in the world, and a-thinkin' how nice it would be if all them dam Crawleys was daid ceptin' Annie, and if me and Annie was a-settin' together on the cabin porch, or Annie was out in the kitchen a-fryin' meat, and I must of drapt away into a drowse.

"I mustn't a-bin sleepin' long when I waked suddent and see a great light a-shinin'. First off I think I'm dreamin' or that the fire has cotched some dry wind blowin's, but the light ain't like any light no one ever saw. It hain't red like blaze light and it hain't hot. It's all bright and shiny. I set up, rubbin' my eyes and starin' at the light—it looks like a blazin' star afire with glory. I knowd it was come Judgment Day. The shivers was a-runnin' up and down my backbone and I'm filled with the shakes and the tremors. A Voice came outen the light sayin': 'Lemuel Sizemore!' and I answer: 'Yes, Lord', knowin' it was Him."

Lem was silent for a moment. The listeners, leaning forward from chairs and benches in rapt attention, shifted positions uneasily and waited to hear more. Someone spat against the cherry red

belly of the stove and the hissing sound filled the store.

The hound made throaty noises in his sleep and turned over, breaking the pregnant silence.

"‘Lemuel Sizemore’, the Voice went on, ‘you bin a wicked, contrary-minded, perverse and sinful bein’. You bin a-hellin’ and a-drinkin’ and a-shootin’ and a-cuttin’ and a-burnin’ all along the mountings. Yore day of reckonin’ draws nigh’. And I says: ‘Yes, Lord’, fearin’ to contradict.

"Then the Voice says: ‘Lemuel Sizemore, repent and atone’, and I says: ‘Yes, Lord. What do you all want me for to do?’

"‘Lemuel Sizemore, forgive them that trespass agin ye and trespass not agin’ them and maybe they’s a chanst to live down your onriness.’ I says: ‘Yes, Lord, I’m a mind to forgive them all, ‘ceptin’ them dam Crawleys’. The Voice says: ‘Lemuel Sizemore, you got to love them Crawleys and forgive them’. And I says: ‘Lord, you all know I already love one of them Crawleys—that’s Annie, Andy’s oldest gal—but the rest of them critters no one can love, not even their maw.’ The Voice got stern then, like my words done annoyed Him, and says: ‘Lemuel Sizemore, arise and go to them Crawleys. Tell them you come in peace and that this drinkin’ and hellin’ and shooting’s got to stop.’"

"I says: ‘Lord, I’m a-willin’ to obey You, but there hain’t no chanst for me to tell them Crawleys nothin’. They’ll start a-shootin’ the minnit they set eyes on me, and a man kain’t talk that’s heavy with lead.’ ‘Lemuel Sizemore’, He says sternlike, ‘take no heed of bullets. Go to them Crawleys and no harm shall come nigh you—and don’t you be totin’ no gun, ‘cause no harm ain’t goin’ to come to them neither.’

"The light faded and the cave was dark and cold. I set there thinkin’ it was all a dream. The fire had died down and I was a-shakin’ like ague, only I hain’t cold, but hot and cold by turns. I throwed some fresh pine fat onto the coals and tipped the jug and drank a tin of corn. For the fust time corn tasted evil in my mouth. But after a time I fell asleep and dreamed peaceable dreams."



THE silence in Anse Grove's store seemed to grow deeper, so that the ticking of the clock and the uneasy movements of the dreaming hound seemed loud. The howling wind found a chink between the logs of the lean-to at the rear of the store and caused a shipping tag to beat a tattoo against the side of an oil can with a noise that caused the listeners to start and glance nervously toward the darkness. No one spoke until, after a long pause, Lem Sizemore resumed his tale.

"In the mornin’," he said, "I waked refreshed and changed. The hate and the likker were gone outen me. I remembered what the Voice had said and I come humble. I shot a squirrel and broiled him over coals in the cave, ponderin’ over the strangeness of it. I tried to laugh and tell myself it war all a dream, yit all the time I war a-scoffin’, I knowd I was readyin’ to do what the Voice tolt me. I tolt myself I war a fool to git myself shot by one of them dam Crawleys on account of a dream, but after I drank a tin of corn I started up the mountin’ to where them Crawleys live, leavin’ my rifle gun in the cave. I was tempted toward scroogin’ down and slinkin’ through the laurel, but some power helt me. I walked straight up like a man into the clearin’ and hollered: ‘Hello the house!’ real friendly and neighborly.

"Hearin’ my hail, Andy Crawley come emergin’ fast from the doorway. Seein’ me, he lepped backward about the length of a saw log into the house and emerged agin with his old fusee in his hand. Annie come right behint him, perturbin’ him with words and tryin’ to grab him while she was a-callin’ to me to run.

"I stood straight, watchin’ Andy heft up his old fusee and level down and take aim. I warn’t scairt, rememberin’ what the Lord tolt me. I stood straight up, not two hundred feet from Andy, while he bore down and aimed. I felt the wind of the bullet as it sang past my ear and I see Annie a-grabbin’ at Andy’s arm and him a-tryin’ to shake her off and shoot agin."

"Andy missed you at two hundred feet? Seems onpossible," said Lafe Goings, incredulously.

"Hit war a miracle," declared Ab Drake piously.

"Seemed like I heerd the Lord sayin': 'Stand fast, Lemuel,'" Lem continued. "But pore, weak, sinful creeter that I am, I dived into the laurel, a-wishin' I had my rifle gun to bore a hole in Andy, and then thankful that I hain't got it. I knowd it war a miracle that Andy missed me that first shot. No Crawley ever missed a fair shot at a Sizemore in better'n twenty year, and no Sizemore ever missed a Crawley, settin' or runnin'. But I'm weak and lackin' faith. I done trusted the Lord one shot, but I hain't got faith to trust even Him to make Andy miss me twicet. I left the laurel and high-tailed it down the side of the mounting, keepin' under cover till I reached the cave."



"I HAIN'T a-blamin' you, Lem," said Anse Groves feelingly. "Iffen Andy ever missed me even oncet I'd give thanks. Maybe Annie distracted Andy's aim."

"The Lord tolt me I wouldn't take no harm," Lem replied solemnly. "I should have stood. T'war God distracted Andy's aim, even iffenn Annie was His instrument. But hearin' that bullet pass my ear upset my faith. Whilst I'm a-pantin' weary in the cave I knowed a miracle happened and am shamed that I misdoubted the Lord's word."

"I reached fer the tin and swallowed a cupful of corn, breathin' hard and feelin' thankful. I started a fire and swallowed another tin of corn, and commenst feelin' worldly again, loadin' my gun and planin' to bore Andy iffenn he follered me. Then I set up in my mind that I won't shoot Andy a tall, except maybe to fan his ear, lessen it become necessary and the Lord tells me it is right to kill the wuthless skonk. My faith is gittin' strong again. I drink a other cup of corn and stretch me feet to the fire, ponderin' the miracle that had happened and rejoicin' that Annie done sided with me."

"After a time I doze and wake to find the whole cave filled again with the glory light, blindin' my eyes. I'm a-waitin' and a-tremblin' when the Voice comes from the light sayin': 'Lemuel Sizemore

hain't you got no faith? Didn't I tell you no harm would befall you iffenn you went in peace?' 'Yes, Lord', I answered. 'I got faith aplenty, but the flesh is weak. I done stood, as you know, and let Andy shoot oncet. The ball blew its breath in my ear and I took no harm, as You tolt me. But, Lord, I ain't certain sure You meant that miracle to happen twicet, so I come away, fast.'

"'Lemuel Sizemore,' the Voice says, kind o' grieved, 'didn't I say nothin' would harm you if you went in peace and with a pure heart?' 'Yes, Lord,' I says, 'you tolt me that and I had faith and believed, but I thought maybe You hain't tolt Andy nothin' about it.'

"'Lemuel Sizemore,' He said, and His voice was terrible stern, 'your faith is powerful lackin' and maybe you oughta be shot.' That perturbed me 'sidable. 'I'll have strong faith next time, Lord,' I promised. 'Only don't let Andy use that scatter gun of his, or maybe some of them slugs might stray.' 'Lemuel Sizemore,' He says, 'iffenn your faith is strong enough he kain't hit you, even with a scatter gun.'

"'I got faith a-plenty now, Lord,' I says. 'But I know them dam Crawleys. They're so pizen mean they mought not pay attention even to You.' 'I'm plumb peevish and dissatisfied with you, Lemuel Sizemore,' the Voice says. 'I've tolt you no harm can come if you have faith.'

"Sudden like I felt good and I says: 'Lord, my faith is strong now. I'll do like you say—only please Lord, online Andy's sights.'

"The light faded and I was alone in the darkness, a-shiverin' like ague, yit I warn't cold and was all filled with faith. Come day I rose up and kilt a squirrel and knowed for certain sure I was a changed bein'.

For more'n twenty year every time I lined sights on a squirrel or a turkey I named them Crawley and rejoiced when they fell, and this time I took no joy, not a mite.

"I wasn't a-doubtin' or a-fearin', only believin'. After I et I went up the mounting again, leavin' my rifle gun in the cave. I walked out into the Crawley turnip patch and stood fast, a-waitin'.

"Them dam Crawleys had a-seen me

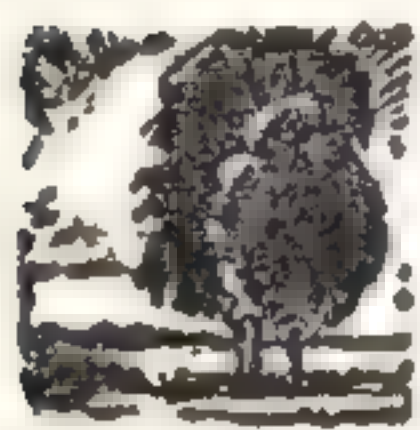
comin'. Andy lepped outen the front door with his old fusee in his hand and Eb riz up from behind the wood pile with the rifle gun that he stolt from the army. They'd bin a-watchin'. They bore down and cut loose, and the air round me was full of high lonesome.

"Eb's bullet stung the tip of my ear liken a fly bite, and Andy's tetched my shirt, yet I took no harm. Fust off I lepped back nigh the length of a hoe handle and was a-minded to lep into the laurel. Then it seemed like the Voice said 'Steady, Lem,' and I stood still a mite of time and then advanced forward, makin' a peace sign.

"Andy was lookin' like as if he seen a ghos'. He drapt his shootin' iron and set down on the door stone, with his mouth open. I see the fear is on him. I walk a spell forard, and then advance backward fast, rememberin' sudden that, whilst the Lord performed a miracle and shook Andy's aim, He hain't said nothin' bout Eb, and, next to Andy, Eb is the best shot 'mongst them dam Crawleys.

"Annie was a-standin' in the doorway and sayin', 'Now, Paw, you behave. Lem's done come in peace without no gun.' Then Eb come a-bustin' round the corner of the cabin, throwin' a fresh shell into his gun. Annie seen him the same time I did. She jumped outen the doorway, yellin': 'Eb, you drap that rifle gun.' But Eb, he's so plaguey wild he ain't goin' to pay no more mind to Annie than he is to the Lord.

"He hefted up that big bore army gun and pinte it so clost the muzzle looked big as a mash barrel. He was a-pressin' the trigger when Annie cracked down on his haid with a stick of firewood, and the bullet sang high and wide."



"HIT war a other miracle," asserted Ab Drake, spitting on the stove.

"Hit war Annie," declared Jase Chaney.

"Hain't no difference," Ab argued. "Annie war His instrument."

"I walked right up to whar Andy was a-sittin'," Lem continued. "He was a-holdin' his face in his hands and a-groanin', and I says: 'Andy Crawley, we done bin foes and at feud more'n



"Lem, that's good corn, even iffen a dam Sizemore made it."

twenty year. I'm a-greetin' you as a friend, askin' to be forgive and to forgive.' 'I hain't wuth a damn no more,' he says, payin' no heed to my sayin'. 'I'm done played out and a-gettin' old.'

"'Shucks, Andy, you hain't so plaguey old,' I says, 'You're a better man than half the fellers half your age.'

"'Me a missin' a Sizemore twicet,' he says, rockin' back and forth in his gloom. 'I'm a old man and my time is nigh. My hands is palsied and my eyes a-failin'.

"'Andy,' I says, 'you're mistook. You're as good as ever and your eye-sight hain't a-failin'.'

"'Howcome I missed ye twicet, then?' he asks. 'I hain't missed a Sizemore, man and boy, for more'n twenty year.'

"'Ifen the good Lord hadn't been a-meanin' you to miss I'd be a cold corpus now, Andy,' I says, tryin' to console him. 'The Lord shook your hand and dimmed your eye. He tolt me to have faith and no harm would come nigh, but His idea of nigh and mine ain't the same, for I felt the wind. Yit, glory be, He was right.'

"'I hain't onderstandin' it, Lem', he says. 'You bin the onriest, meanest, shootinest of all the dam Sizemores, yit you come unarmed.'

"'The Lord tolt me to come in peace,' I says.

"'I hain't a-believin' the Lord'll talk with no dam Sizemore,' he argues.

"'Andy,' I says, 'iffen I prove your eye is good as ever, will you believe? I hain't admittin' no man can beat me firin' a rifle gun, but if anyone in these mountings can do it, you're the man.'

"'Missed you twicet when I held steady bead on your left eye,' says Andy, shakin' his head sad like. 'I kain't understand.'

"'No man onderstands the ways of the Lord, Andy,' I tolt him. 'And He willed it. Iffen you'll be less onreasonable, I'll prove it.'

"'I'm a-dodderin' and a-droolin', he says mournful. 'Kain't even hit a Sizemore.'

"Took me 'sidable arguing and aid from Annie to git him to come down through the laurel to the cave to git my rifle gun. We have a gulp of corn, and Andy says: 'Lem, that's good corn, even iffen a dam Sizemore made it.' So we have another and I say: 'Course, Andy, you kain't hope to shoot like a Sizemore, but I'm a-provin' you can shoot as well as ever.' He takes another drink and yells, 'I still kin outshoot any dam Sizemore in the mountings.' We move outen the cave and I says: 'Andy, you see them two sycamore balls a-hangin' at the end of that limb? You shoot the one to the left and I'll take the one to the right.'

"We hefted up and bore down and shot at the same time and busted them sycamore balls into puffs of fuzz.

"'I kain't onderstand it whatsomever,' Andy says. 'I done missed you twicet and then bust a sycamore ball what's further off.'

"'I tolt you, Andy, the Lord willed it,' I says.

"'I hain't a-believin' even yit,' he says, gitting stubborn. 'That pesky gal Annie spiled my aim. I'm a-minded to take a strap to her.'

"Well, we argued and debated, and finally we went back in the cave and had a few more tins of corn, and I tanted him into shootin' again. 'See that squirrel up there?' I says. 'You shoot off his right ear and I'll shoot off his left. That'll prove it.'

"So we upped and squinted and shot, and the squirrel come down with both

ears off. Andy lepped in the air and knocked his heels together three times and yelled: 'I kin outshoot any damn Sizemore east of the Rocky Mountings. But I ain't understandin' how I missed you twicet.'

"'The Lord willed it, Andy, and you kain't overcome Him,' I says.

"'I hain't quite convicted,' he says. 'But it must have bin somethin'. I hain't doubtin' your word, Lem, and I would like another tin of that corn.'

"We go back in the cave and I tell Andy how the Light came and the Voice tolt me what to do. And after a few more tins Andy says: 'Lem, what air we all bin a-fightin' about all these years?'

"'Bout your pap beatin' my grandpap in a mule swap,' I says.

"'That hain't it,' he says. 'Twar 'bout your pap stealin' a hawg from my pap-py.'

"We come nigh to fist blows arguin', until I says: 'Andy, I'm a-marryin' Annie.'

"'I hain't a-goin' to have no grandsons named Sizemore,' Andy yells, and we argue again until final I says: 'Andy, I bet you that iffen they're boys and your grandchildren and my children they kin outshoot even us'ns.'

"That convinced him, so Andy and me meandered up the mounting and broke the news to Annie—a-braggin' how our childern would be the shootinest folk in these parts until she plum blushed. Ab, he starts to cut some high lonesomes, but Andy cammed him down with a stick of firewood."

"Peace done come to Hominy," said Bill Penald. "Hit war a miracle."

Lem Sizemore arose and stretched himself. "I'm a-totin' a sack of meal, some sow belly, ten cents worth of hard candy and four yards of that purty yaller cloth Annie looked at last time she was in."

"Buyin' fixins fer Annie already?" jibed Anse.

"Me' and Annie is marryin' come Wednesday sundown," said Lem. "I'll have food and likker for all that comes. And—" Lem paused for emphasis—"the Lord tolt me to quit shootin' Crawleys, but he hain't said nothin' 'bout not scatterin' a hatful of slugs from a scatter gun iffen anyone starts any bellin'."



*The last act of a very gallant
gentleman. . . .*

THE SOUTH POLE RACE

A Fact Story

By TED LEITZELL

THERE was a lull in the conversation. Then Amundsen looked up from his perusal of Dr. Cook's travel-worn diary and said,

"Doctor, I can't tell you how thrilled I was the other day when I learned you had reached the Pole. I felt all along that you were going to win, and I'd rather have had it be you than any man on earth. But," and he paused to shake his head, "you've taken all the wind right out of my sails."

"How?" asked the Doctor.

"Well, while you've been gone I've been organizing to drift across the Polar basin in the *Fram*. I figured that if I went into the ice further east than Nansen and Otto here did," jerking his head toward Captain Sverdrup, "I might

make a lot higher latitude and be able to sledge to the Pole easily. My backers and the government aren't thinking about the Pole so much as the scientific results I'd get in a three or four year drift, but to the public the discovery of the Pole is the all important thing. I have to have public support to pay for the expedition, and I'm afraid now that I'll never be able to pay off my debts if I try it so soon after your success."

Cook's answer was slow in coming. At last he spoke.

"Well, then, Roald, why don't you go south? You could make it easily and get enough support to finance a northern drift a year or so later."

"I've thought of that," replied the Norwegian, "but what about the Brit-

ish? Shackleton nearly made it last January, and Scott will go south next year with an outfit ten times as well financed as I could ever hope to do."

"Don't worry about the British," Sverdrup broke in. "They're still sledging in the days of McClintock. Just because their dogs died in 1902 from being fed nothing but dried fish, Shackleton used ponies as far as he could and then man-hauled his supplies. Scott's figuring on doing the same thing. He's even experimenting with tractors."

"I think Otto is right," said Dr. Cook. "The very size of Scott's expedition will defeat him. Ponies are no good at all on glaciers, and not much account on the Barrier. He's going to have so many inexperienced men and so much untried equipment that you can beat him easily with dog teams and skis. That reminds me, Roald. I had to make a few changes from our sledge design of 1897."

They talked rapidly about the sledging equipment Cook and Amundsen had invented while shipmates on the *Belgica* twelve years earlier, with Sverdrup an interested participant. The conversation continued until it came time for Cook to dress in formal clothes and leave for his dinner engagement in the royal palace with King Frederick and the royal family. As Amundsen and Sverdrup left the Doctor, the gaunt Norwegian had not committed himself, but the plan they discussed that afternoon was slowly turning over in his mind.



THAT meeting took place in Copenhagen's Phoenix Hotel in September, 1909, only three days before Peary flashed his denunciation of Cook to a startled world. And from that informal conversation developed the Scott-Amundsen race to the South Pole. This was the strangest race in the history of exploration, a race to a goal which neither participant valued greatly for itself, one which led to a controversy just as bitter, but not as well publicized, as the Cook-Peary fight over the North Pole.

Amundsen decided on the South Pole because it was an easy jaunt with a sure reward in publicity that would make his serious and difficult work in the Arctic

possible. Scott made the South Pole his chief objective because in that way he could raise funds for the expedition from public subscription, and have an opportunity to pursue further scientific work with other men. He knew that there was virtually no scientific value in his attaining the South Pole by the route projected, for it meant following his own tracks of 1902 for several hundred miles, and continuing in Shackleton's footsteps to within one hundred miles of the goal. Amundsen, on the other hand, knew there would be real scientific dividends from his exploring a new route through absolutely unknown territory, but made success in reaching the Pole his chief objective. There is irony in the popular belief that Scott was the scientist and Amundsen the adventurer. In cold fact, the Norwegians brought back a far richer contribution to science than did the much more elaborate British expedition.

As a race it was no contest from the beginning. Pitting Scott against Amundsen was like matching Dewey's Pacific squadron with a modern cruiser, or racing a limousine against the winner of an Indianapolis Memorial Day race. Amundsen, the high ranking medical student who quit the university and deliberately spent years training himself as an explorer, whose mastery of the Northwest Passage was a combination of spectacular attainment and brilliant, fruitful scientific study of the north magnetic pole; Scott, the British naval officer, steeped in the tradition of British officialdom, leader of a single Antarctic expedition where all concerned began as incompetent greenhorns. Amundsen, who knew the technique of ski and dog team as intimately as Scott knew his quarter deck. Amundsen, the born leader of men; Scott, the naval officer who despite his charm and real nobility of character, carried naval discipline into his Antarctic camp. Amundsen of the powerful, methodical mind, who could temper all decisions with his years of experience, who was steeped in the lore of exploration; Scott, with a brain no better than average, bound by the tradition of British exploration, hampered by blind prejudice, unable to comprehend the technical contributions of Cook, Sverdrup, or

Amundsen, blandly unaware of the principles which made it possible for such men as Cook and Sverdrup to accomplish as ordinary routine, things which would have been impossible or heroic feats for Franklin or Greely. So intense was Amundsen's preparation that, although he had never seen it, he knew far more about the Barrier than did Scott, who had explored hundreds of miles of its eastern limit.

Amundsen has been criticized for keeping his Antarctic plans secret until the last possible moment. He has been accused of poaching on Scott's private preserves, accused of stealing Scott's earlier discoveries to sneak the Pole away from him, blamed for all of the misfortune that befell the British party.

Actually, these charges are nonsense. Amundsen's expedition was a private venture—so was Scott's. He had been in the Antarctic long before Scott. His base was a spot considered hopeless by both Scott and Shackleton. His route was through unexplored territory that Scott and Shackleton had not touched in two expeditions, and that Scott had no intention of touching in this retracing of his earlier path. No plan of Scott or Shirase—leader of the Japanese expedition in the *Kainan Maru*—would be affected by Amundsen. In short, it was nobody's business.

However, secrecy was essential. Amundsen knew how the British Royal Geographic medal had been given Peary in exchange for a promise to leave the South Pole for Scott, knew what a little pressure from the British foreign office would do toward making the Norwegian government cancel the loan of the *Fram*. Scott's attitude had been shown in 1907, when he indignantly protested to keep Shackleton from using the old *Discovery* winter quarters which had been built by the semi-official expedition of 1902, of which Scott was the salaried leader and Shackleton an officer.



IT BOILS down to this: Scott and Amundsen were both after the South Pole, each using it as bait to raise money for other objectives. Amundsen planned to follow a different route and use different meth-

ods than Scott. He marveled at the folly of the British plans, but reasoned that if Scott were undertaking a job he did not understand, that was Scott's business. Accordingly, the Amundsen plan was made without considering Scott in any way. When ready to announce his plan to the world, Amundsen sent Scott a cablegram which reached him in Melbourne.

From his intensive study of earlier Antarctic work, Amundsen deduced what Shackleton had missed when his ship lay before it: The Bay of Whales at the east limit of the Great Barrier in Ross Bay is a permanent geographical feature, the selfsame "Bight" observed by Sir James Ross seventy years earlier, and which had been observed by several others since. If that were true, part of the Barrier there must be resting on solid ground, not floating like the precipitous wall that fronts on the rest of Ross Sea. He could, therefore, camp on the Barrier itself at a point sixty miles nearer the Pole than Scott's base, which was several hundred miles to the west.

Amundsen had noted other important points. There were thousands of seals to supply fresh meat so essential for health of man and dog. Most south bound expeditions that penetrated the pack ice between 175°E and 180° had gone through to the ice-free waters of Ross Sea with little difficulty; all others had considerable trouble. Scott and Shackleton had described the Barrier as being ideal for skis, where dog teams would be much more suitable transport than ponies. It was all so simple and easy that in September, 1909, Amundsen was able to predict with an error of just one day how long it would take the *Fram* to sail the sixteen thousand miles to his anchorage on the Barrier, and to give the exact date in 1912 when he would return to his base camp with the South Pole in his pocket!

Scott, on the contrary, tried to "muddle through" in the best British style. Where Amundsen had fitted the *Fram* with Diesel motors, Scott stuck to his old inefficient steam engines in the *Terra Nova*, yet staked part of the success of his expedition on expensive and experimental motor sledges! Scott selected for

his base a site that was actually separated from the Barrier by open water during much of the year, and that required dangerous sledging over bad sea ice during other months. By failure to understand the proper point to enter the ice pack, Scott spent twenty days and great quantities of fuel passing through what Amundsen found to be a four day holiday cruise. With thousands of seal and penguin at hand, Scott carried *biscuits* to feed the few dogs he took south, and then wondered at their loss of weight during heavy work. The tons of extra, unnecessary weight represented by ponies, fodder, motor sledges, motor fuel, etc., so dangerously overloaded the *Terra Nova* that it nearly floundered during a gale. Amundsen was one of the first to discover that amber glasses would prevent snow blindness with little loss of vision, and had no trouble from this dread disease: in addition to scurvy, Scott's men were hampered nearly all the time by bad attacks of snow blindness. Scott's *Diary* has attained immortality as a literary document, but nothing is more pathetic than this journal if read after a study of Amundsen's plan. Poor Scott—so brave and gallant, but so hopelessly unprepared for the problems he was to face!



ON AUGUST 9, 1909, Amundsen sailed for the south. On board were provisions for two years, a full line of tools and raw materials, plenty of sledges, special clothing, etc., a hut which had been built and then taken down with all parts numbered, and scientific and other equipment. The decks had false floors three inches above the surface, to make it safe and comfortable for the hundred odd Eskimo dogs that rode as deck passengers, and there were awnings to shield them from the sun during passage through the tropics. There were nine men in the shore party, and ten destined to remain on the *Fram*.

On January 11, they sighted the hundred foot wall of sheer ice that is the Barrier, and a one day trip to the east brought them to the Bay of Whales, right where it was marked on Amundsen's map. They had to wait a day for ice to

clear from the bay, but on January 14, one day ahead of schedule, they cruised into its open waters, moored to an ice foot, and begun unloading. In two weeks they had their hut erected about four miles from the bay, and all supplies unloaded and roughly stored.

On February 4, Scott's *Terra Nova*, under command of Lieutenant Pennel, came into the bay. It had sailed from England on June 1, deposited Scott in his winter quarters on McMurdo Sound earlier in January, and cruised several hundred miles east along the Barrier to deposit a party under Hamilton for the purpose of exploring King Edward VII Land. Amundsen welcomed his rivals warmly, attracted their comment by refraining from all questions that might be of value to him in the race south, and invited the party to make its winter quarters there in the bay, offering them all exploration rights to territory lying to the east.

Hamilton did not feel that he could accept this invitation without authority from Scott, and returned to McMurdo Sound after vain efforts to find a landing point further east. The British refusal was also based on their belief that Amundsen's quarters were very dangerously located. Amundsen does not seem to have believed this sportsmanlike offer worthy of recording, but it is described in full by Priestly, one of the English officers, as quoted by Cherry-Garard in his "Worst Journey in the World."

On February 10, Amundsen began his first southern journey. Four days later the Norwegian party had built a depot and deposited over 1,700 pounds of pemmican, fresh seal meat, biscuit, chocolate, and other provisions on the eightieth parallel, ninety-nine miles south of Framheim (the winter base). Then they jumped on their empty sledges and glided home over the smooth Barrier surface in just two days.

This depot journey was enough to show that the plan was right, with even wider safety margins than needed. The sledges, built to withstand hard use, were much stronger than needed for this easy going, and were accordingly lightened by more than one hundred pounds each.

A week later the second depot party

ROALD AMUNDSEN



went out, passed the first depot, left more than half a ton of stores at latitude eighty-one, and another 1,250 pounds at latitude eighty-two. Again they rode back to Framheim on the sledges.

Another depot journey took over a ton of fresh seal meat to the eighty degree depot, plus several hundred pounds of other stores. Consequently, by April 10, Amundsen had nearly four tons of provisions laid out in well-marked depots to the south, with each depot marked for miles on either side. In addition, over sixty tons of fresh seal meat had been stored at Framheim—adequate assurance that the increasing family of dogs would come through the winter in perfect condition. The *Fram*, meanwhile, had returned to Buenos Aires and began a complete circle of the globe pursuing oceanographic studies of southern waters. Thus, with winter coming on, Amundsen had every reason to feel proud, and through the dark months his party burrowed new rooms below the surface of the Barrier (they even had a steam bath

in an ice walled cave), and had a grand time making final alterations in equipment, playing practical jokes on one another, taking regular meteorological observations, and living like kings on the abundance of fresh seal meat and the excellent supplies from home. Each man did pretty much as he pleased. All bunked in one large, well-heated and ventilated room. There were no orders given or needed. Amundsen, like Sverdrup in *his* Fram expedition, had men who “could put their shoulders to the wheel without putting a spoke in it.”



WHILE Amundsen's men were luxuriating in the easiest life any of them had ever experienced on an exploring expedition, Scott was landing in McMurdo Sound to prepare for his Polar bid. To understand many of the misfortunes which later befell him, a certain knowledge of local geography is needed.

Ross Island lies a few miles east of the mainland, from which it is separated by McMurdo Sound. On the south and east it is permanently tied to the Barrier. The sound freezes over solid in winter, but opens in summer. The old *Discovery* quarters were at Hut Point on Cape Armitage, a finger-shaped cape projecting from the island's southwest corner. Its southeastern side is in permanent contact with the Barrier, but to the north and west it faces the sound. North of it is a bay bounded on the other side by Glacier Tongue. North of that is another bay, two or three miles wide, bounded by Cape Evans. When the sea ice went out in summer, it was impossible to get from Cape Evans further south, for land passage was barred by the steep ridges and glaciers of Mt. Erebus which rises to 13,000 feet. For a few weeks of the year it was even difficult to reach the Barrier from Hut Point, for with sea ice out it was necessary to climb a steep ridge that ran the length of Cape Armitage.

When Scott entered McMurdo Sound he saw that he had a wide choice of sites for his base camp. His first mistake was in selecting Cape Evans instead of a more southerly point, for as it later turned out, sea ice between Glacier Point

and Cape Evans went out long before the ice that bound Hut Point. In unloading, his equipment had to be hauled across more than a mile of land-fast ice, and by delaying until the last day in unloading his third motor sledge he lost it through the ice. It still rests at the bottom of McMurdo Sound.

By January 12, he had two sledges, seventeen ponies, twenty-six dogs, and tons of equipment and provisions safely on solid ground at Cape Evans, and the hut was far enough advanced for them to move in. While this work was in progress there was one very curious adventure.

Ponting, the best photographer of any expedition toward either Pole, was working along the edge of a floe to photograph some killer whales which had been attacking penguins. The killers saw him and launched a ferocious attack, diving beneath the floe and hitting it great blows with their blunt heads. The floe shattered into fragments as the eight killers churned the water to foam. One ugly head rose from the water and leered at him from less than two yards. He was enveloped in its fishy breath as he leaped from cake to cake, and reached solid ice not a moment too soon.

On January 25, with twelve men, eight ponies, and twenty-six dogs, he marched south from Cape Evans on his first depot expedition.

He was not a moment too soon—the next day the ice between Cape Evans and Glacier Tongue went out. They passed Hut Point, ascended the Barrier, and collected all of their stores at Safety Camp, about two miles from its edge. Then began the actual depot work.

Thirty-five miles to the southeast he laid Corner Camp. From here the path went straight south. Near latitude seventy-nine they placed Bluff Depot, and sent Lieutenant Evans back with the three weakest ponies.

On the way south they found two tents left by Shackleton when he dashed for his ship early in 1909. They were filled with snow and ice, but when dug out the outfit was in good condition. The primus still held fuel. Cherry-Garard lighted it and cooked a meal from Shackleton's year-old food.

Trouble dogged their footsteps from the first. Several of the ponies were so poor in quality that they called them "crocs," and Scott had no faith in the dogs.

The ponies sank over their fetlocks in the Barrier surface, and made slow work of hauling. This trouble had been anticipated from Shackleton's experience, and experimental snowshoes had been brought from England, but somebody forgot and there was only one set with the party. The dogs were sent back to get more after a trial had shown them to have a "magical effect," but the ice was out and they could not get to Cape Evans.

Had the base camp been located on the next cape south, it could have been reached easily by dog team, and the depot party would have been much more successful.

Temperatures were not nearly as low as Amundsen experienced, but the ponies suffered terribly from blizzards that did not bother dogs at all, and the men suffered likewise in trying to protect them. Weakened by storm, by floundering through soft snow, and by inadequate rest, progress was very slow. On February 16 they were still forty miles from the eightieth parallel, but a temperature of -21° forced them to halt. In this, their most southerly depot, they deposited about a ton of stores. (It is interesting to note that the Norwegians, experienced in cold weather travel and outfitted with dogs that could protect themselves by burrowing in snow for rest, laid their depot on the eighty-first parallel, in a temperature of -49° , suffering little inconvenience.)

Lieutenant Oates, the beloved "Soldier" whose courage and self-sacrifice a few months later brought him undying fame, earned the admiration of all by his skill in bringing the ponies through to here, but he knew that some of the crocs would never make it back alive. He urged Scott to kill the weaker ones, cache their meat for dog feed, and rely more heavily on the dogs the following years.

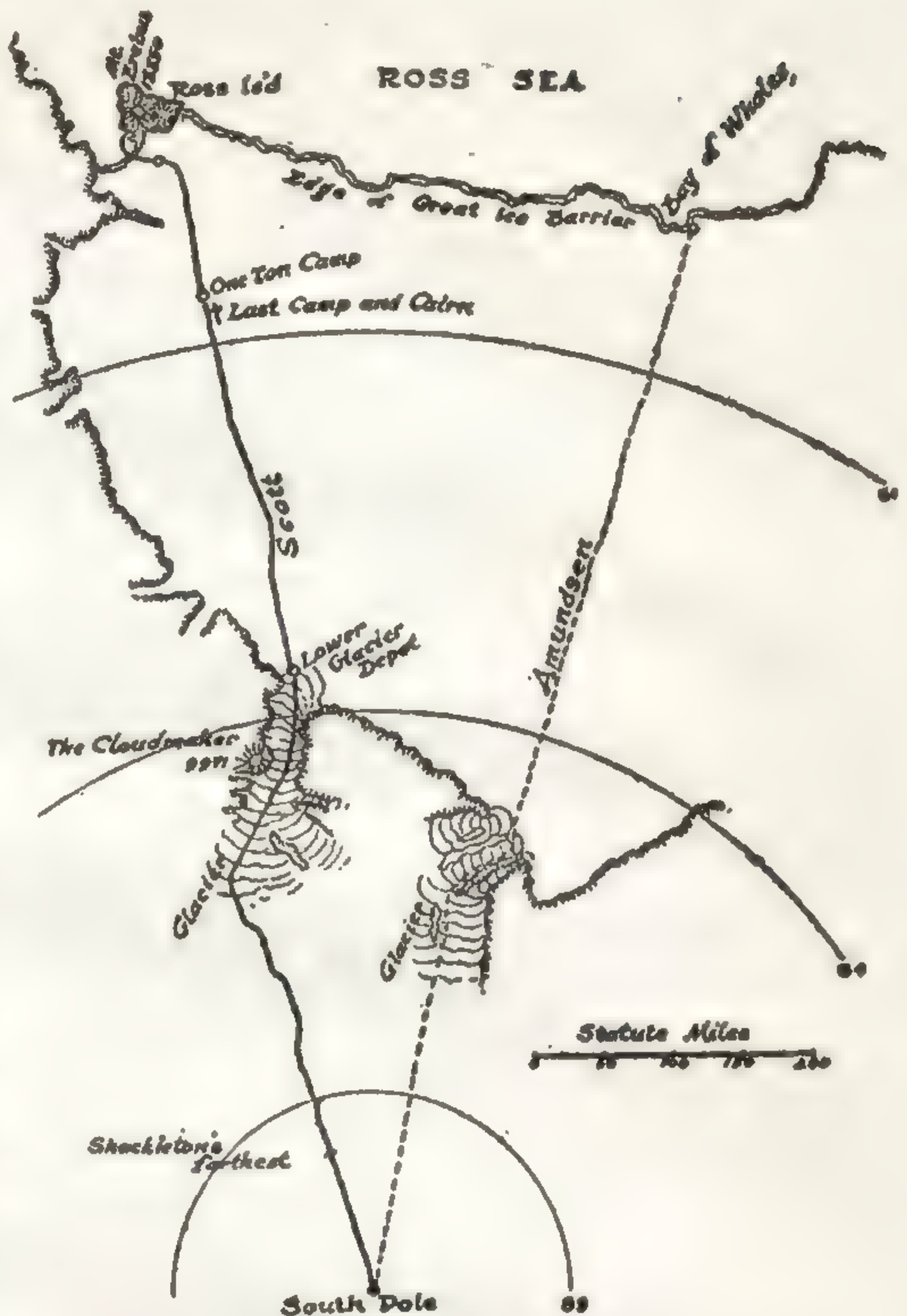
Scott turned down the suggestion. That mistake, more than any other one, caused the death of five men.

 SCOTT and several of the men dashed rapidly back to Safety Camp with the dog teams, leaving Bowers, Oates, and Gran to bring back the ponies at their own pace. Three died on the way. Then Bowers attempted to take four of them back to Hut Point on Cape Armitage over the strip of sea ice which still held. It broke up while he was on the way, but Bowers tried desperately to save the ponies. After many hours of struggle, with killer whales raising their ugly snouts on all sides and attempting to crack the floes as they had when chasing Ponting, he managed to save one pony. This left two alive from the eight which had begun the depot journey.

They found a bag of mail for them at the Point, including a letter from the *Terra Nova* telling of the visit to Amundsen. Scott's comments in his diary are restrained. He is surprised to find that the Norwegians brought through so many dogs and had actually been able to make camp at the Bay of Whales, realizes the menace of his plans, decides not to change his own in any way. In contrast to Amundsen's courtesy when the *Terra Nova* visited him, are the angry threats of Scott's companions that they would go down to Framheim and have a show-down before either party started for the Pole.

For nearly six weeks the party was marooned on Hut Point, unable to reach the main base because of open water. At last, on April 13, they got back to the rest of the party, after a bitter and disastrous journey of eighty days. They had worked their souls right out of their bodies, suffered terrible hardships, seen that their pony transport was unreliable, and lost nearly half of their total supply of ponies—merely to cache a small fraction of the needed supplies at a series of points as far south as $79^{\circ} 28'$. But, Scott had no choice but to go ahead with his plans for the Pole. That was the chief objective of the expedition, and his entire financial future depended on his success.

There was an excellent scientific staff with the expedition, and through the winter night they worked steadily on meteorological, geological, and zoological



studies. Three men—Wilson, Cherry-Garard, and Bowers—made a winter journey to Cape Crozier, the breeding place of the emperor penguin, and after ghastly suffering brought back three of the eggs and an eyewitness account of the penguin's domestic habits.

It does not seem that Scott or any of his party had any conception of the task before them. Amundsen's entire party put in the whole winter reshaping equipment to meet specific conditions, enlarging boots so that their feet might be protected by more socks from the unexpected low temperatures, arranging their sledges so that camp could be pitched without unpacking them, checking their instruments, preparing equipment for the party scheduled to explore the land east of Framheim, and doing everything else that, in their considered judgment, would help make the program successful. In contrast, Scott delegated much of this responsibility to inexperienced seamen, and was willing to rely on untried, untested equipment for the most crucial journey of his life.

A sample of this attitude is shown in

his mid-winter comments on scurvy. Dr. Cook on the *Belgica*, Sverdrup with the *Fram*, and Peary in 1906 had all demonstrated that fresh meat could not only prevent scurvy, but could also cure well advanced cases. Nevertheless, Scott accepted as gospel the opinions of Dr. Atkinson, who held that the first cause of scurvy was tainted food, that poor physical environment was a strong contributing cause, that fresh vegetables are the best curative with the value of fresh meat doubtful, although it had possibilities in polar climate.



WHEN spring approached in September, they began short sledging trips for training purposes. Then came final preparations, and on October 24 the trek began. It was more than a week before all parties were in motion on the Barrier, the motor sledges chugging southward with heavy loads, and pony parties following. The motor sledges broke down after going a few miles, and their drivers loaded sledges to the maximum and began man-hauling well in advance of the parties that followed.

From the start, the ponies gave trouble. They sank deep into the Barrier surface—as mentioned before, somebody had forgotten the snowshoes. Some of them marched much more rapidly than others. Some could not be halted for lunch. As a result there was a difference of several hours in the starting time of different groups.

They maintained a fifteen mile daily average. Temperatures were mild, ranging from nightly minimums of -15° to -20° up to day time maximums of 5° to 20° above zero. Even so, occasional blizzards weakened the ponies and put the men to unpleasant labor building snow walls. Some of the men had learned to ski, others walked. Small depots were left every seventy-five miles, and after crossing the eighty-second parallel they killed the first pony. It was fed to the dogs, who had been slogging along with little trouble.

As other ponies were killed their flesh was added to the diet, and the tone of the diaries became more cheerful. They were held up four days in early Decem-

ber by a blizzard with temperatures fluctuating around the freezing point, and on December 9 they reached the foot of the glacier and killed the rest of the ponies. Before them now lay the dangerous ascent to the plateau and the long march south, man-hauling their supplies.

The dogs hauled a few hundred pounds part way up the glacier, and then turned back with nearly empty sledges. There were now four parties of four men, each hauling one sledge loaded with supplies.

They followed Shackleton's route up the glacier, making the ascent in twelve days as compared with his fifteen-day pioneer expedition. Four men turned back from the upper glacier depot on December 21 at about latitude eighty-five. The remaining eight struggled on through the soft snow and rough mountain ranges, until they broke through on the high, smooth plateau. They left a depot on about the eighty-seventh parallel as the old year ended, and on January 4, Scott sent back three men, leaving Bowers, Oates, Wilson, P. O. Evans, and Scott with about 150 miles to go. All were more or less affected by scurvy, and snow blindness had been bothering most of them. They were worn down from the labor of drawing a sledge through the soft snow, and the ten thousand foot altitude did not help.

Although the temperature hovered only a few degrees below zero, and they had a succession of fine days, they were all bothered by the cold. Eighty-five miles from the Pole they lightened their burden by caching a week's store of food. They passed the eighty-ninth parallel on January 13, and that night, only fifty-one miles from the Pole, Scott wrote, "If we don't get to it, we shall be damned close."

Two days later they left another little store of food. Only twenty-seven miles to go. And then the blow fell.

On the afternoon of January 16, they came on an old camp, with ski and dog tracks. The Norwegians had been there. It was a bitter disappointment to all. "All the day dreams must go. It will be a wearisome return."

The saddened party did not sleep much that night, and were on the trail at 7:30 the next morning. They marched

all day to within about three miles of their goal. On the next day they found Amundsen's tent, and noted that the Norwegian had "made thoroughly sure of their mark and fully carried out their program."

It must be remembered that Scott's diary was his personal record, not designed for publication. Considering this, one must marvel at his sportmanship and courage. There are no complaints, no recriminations, none of the accusations that mar the books of his biographers. Scott, in the anguish of defeat, worn and haggard from terrible hardship, troubled by scurvy far from certain that he would ever return, showed the grandeur of his soul.



WHILE the little party of Englishmen were making their empty gesture of planting the Union Jack a few hundred yards from the Norwegian flag, Amundsen and his men were sliding easily over the Barrier, only a few days' journey from Framheim. Their trip to the Pole and back had been reeled off with the same precision and margin of safety shown in all earlier stages of the expedition.

They had made a false start on September 7, but when -72° proved too cold for their dogs, they had unloaded at the eighty degree depot and returned to Framheim. On October 19, five days earlier than Scott, the journey began. There were four sledges and fifty-two dogs, driven by Hanssen, Wisting, Hassel, Bjaaland, and Amundsen.

It took the Norwegians four days to drive the ninety-nine miles to their first depot. On the way several of Hanssen's team dropped into a crevasse, and that worthy actually protested when Amundsen decided to back track a few miles and detour around the dangerous area. He chortled with delight one morning, and crowed triumphantly, because when he came from the tent he found a bottomless crevasse only a few feet from the entrance.

They rested two days at the first depot, stuffing the dogs with fresh meat and eating liberal portions themselves. Then they loaded 880 pounds on each

sledge and drove south, the men riding behind the sledges on skis, towed by the dogs, and the picked teams driving over the smooth surface at speeds up to six miles an hour. This experience vindicated Amundsen's contention that the Barrier was an ideal surface for dog and ski.

Their rations included the usual pemmican, chocolate, biscuits, tea, etc. In addition they had a large quantity of skim milk powder, a highly efficient food which is recognized today as a source of several vitamins. Because many dogs were destined for slaughter they carried little additional fresh meat—just enough to ward off scurvy and give an occasional change in diet.

At the suggestion of Major Anthony Fiala, who helped plan the equipment, they carried a very liberal supply of fuel for the stoves. Fiala had written Scott a friendly letter of advice containing the same suggestion, and had been courteously informed, "These matters have been taken care of for the expedition."

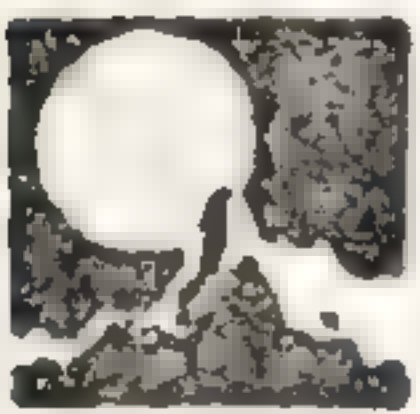
Amundsen's schedule called for only seventeen miles a day across the Barrier. They could have traveled much faster, but he did not know how difficult they would find the ascent to the mainland. The important thing was a safe and certain journey. Depots were left at every degree of latitude south of 83° , giving them an unbroken chain of caches every sixty-eight miles from latitude eighty to the southern limit of the Barrier at about latitude 85° .

They covered this distance of 439 miles in twenty-one days, somewhat faster than schedule. Because the men were towed nearly all the day, and because the dogs were well rested by regular stops, they were all in perfect condition when they began exploring their new route to the plateau.

They had to ascend a glacier, which ran almost at right angles to their course, and they named it for Axel Heiberg. Bjaaland and Hassel had the time of their lives exploring ahead, selecting the most thrilling ski runs possible. Some of the grades were so steep that it took twenty dogs to a sledge, but Bjaaland always found steeper ones to ski down when he swished back toward camp

after a reconnoitering advance. They were stopped by sheer ice falls when part way up the glacier, and had to pick a path across snow slopes that formed an angle of 45° , with a fall of several thousand feet for anybody who lost his footing. On one day, November 22 (while Scott was crossing the eighty-first parallel), they ascended 5,100 feet while marching nearly twenty miles, to a camp at $85^\circ 36'$.

From this point, 10,900 feet high, they thought they could see the circum-polar plateau, and killed half of their dogs. Then a blizzard stopped them for several days, while men and dogs gorged on fresh dog meat. After four days they were irked by inactivity, and set off in a sixty mile wind with a temperature of -17° . The men were chaffing each other, roaring their hearty jests between tearing gusts of wind, Bjaaland delighting in the hazardous skiing and Hanssen chuckling when they had to pull dogs from crevasses. They stopped after twelve miles, when to their surprise they noted that they were descending rapidly. Next morning they saw that their camp was near the edge of a steep descent, and that they were only part way through the mountains.



AS THEY marched on south they crossed one formation so dangerous they called it the Devil's Ballroom. They were marching on a surface which arched about three feet over another, supposedly solid, covering. Once Bjaaland went through the upper, and then through the supposedly solid under surface. Just in the nick of time he caught a rope tied to his sledge and saved himself. On that day their path was so circuitous that they made a net southward gain of only nine miles.

On December 4, they passed through Hell Gate to a broad plateau, and in the next two days reeled off more than fifty miles while climbing from 9,500 to nearly 11,000 feet. Although they made these marches in a blinding blizzard, they found next day that their dead reckoning agreed with their actual position to within a mile.

They were descending slowly as they

passed the eighty-eighth parallel and entered the home stretch. Blizzards plagued them again, and Amundsen speaks frequently of Hanssen's skill as a dog driver. The dogs could not see and were hard to drive, and there were no landmarks visible, but he kept right on the course by compass, despite sastrugi that turned the sledges on their sides time and again. (It is interesting to note that the fittings of Hanssen's sledge were aluminum instead of steel, and had no effect on the compass needle.)

When they crossed the hundred mile mark the weather cleared, and the zero temperature seemed almost sultry. They got regular observations, and their dead reckoning checked every day to within a mile. The dogs were rested for a full day on December 8, and a depot of food was left.

At three on the afternoon of December 14, there was a simultaneous cry of "Halt" as each driver, watching his sledge meter, reckoned the goal was won.

Their flag had been lashed to a staff made of two ski sticks. For the all-important ceremony of planting it at the Pole, Amundsen insisted that each man take part. Five fists grasped the staff together—five men drove it into the snow. That night they celebrated in their tent with a little extra seal meat, and with a smoke that Wisting had smuggled along for the occasion.

Observations the next day showed them at $89^\circ 56'$. While Amundsen took hourly observations, three men went out in three different directions, one along the line of march, one to the left, and one to the right. Remembering the bitterness of the North Pole controversy, the Norwegians were determined to encircle the position of the South Pole beyond dispute. They left the tent where it was and moved about five miles to the point that their observations showed must be the actual axis—Scott's computations placed it a few hundred yards away. Later recomputation by the University of Christiana showed the margin of error to be less than a mile.

Amundsen left a message for Scott, who was on that day struggling up Beardmore Glacier. After his relatively easy journey Amundsen was fairly cer-

CAPT. ROBERT FALCON SCOTT

From photo from film
found with the bodies.
Probably taken a few days
before his death.

From photo taken before
starting on last voyage



tain that the English party would make it, but he also suspected they might be short of supplies. He has been criticized for not leaving a cache there, and in a later conversation with Fiala he said he left plenty of fuel and could have left a can of oil.

"Why didn't you?" asked the Major.

"We were both sailors," replied Amundsen, "and a sailor is insulted if you throw him a rope."

Perhaps he was right.

The Norwegian return to Framheim was uneventful. Bright weather while they covered the stretch that had been obscured by blizzards on the outward march enabled them to chart new mountains and glaciers. When they reached the Barrier, their sledges held food and supplies for thirty-five days. Although they found every depot on the return from here, none was needed, since it took them only twenty days to reach Framheim.

While they were out, Lieutenant Prestad led an expedition which explored a considerable area east of Framheim from the coast line as far south as latitude eighty.

The scientific results of the expedition, in addition to the *Fram's* oceanography,

include delineation of a wide stretch of coast line, the discovery of new mountain ranges and glaciers, an unbroken chain of meteorological observations, a sixty thousand square mile gap cut from the unknown, and the determination that the Barrier at the Bay of Whales is solidly anchored. Byrd used this bit of information in planning his expeditions—Little America was located near Framheim, and Byrd's men actually found some of the supplies cached by Amundsen on the southward march.



SCOTT completed his polar observations on January 18 and then marched seven miles along his back trail. For about a week all went well, with marches averaging about seventeen miles a day, except for two half-days lost by blizzards.

Then the strain began to tell. They felt the cold worse each day, Evans suffering from frost bite. Hunger increased steadily, and the food allowance was cut so close that the supply barely lasted from one depot to another. A sail rigged on the sledge brought help from the wind, so that speed held up, but each time they gained a few miles they lost it from blizzards.

Evans weakened more rapidly than the others. Wilson strained a tendon in his leg before the end of January, and Oates began to suffer terribly, although he had little to say.

Early in February, just as Wilson's leg healed enough so he could pull on the sledge, Scott had a bad fall. By this time Oates' toes had turned black from frostbite, and Evans' frozen fingernails were falling from his hands. On February 13, they were down to the last meal when they reached the Middle Glacier depot. By this time Evans' mind had begun to wander. The march was slowed down on his account, and food again ran short. On the 17th, Evans fell and suffered a severe concussion. He dropped behind the sledges, and they lost precious hours going back after him. Abandonment never occurred to any member of the party. He was put in a tent, but died a few hours later.

They reached Shambles Camp (where the last ponies had been killed) the next day and filled up on horse meat. There was food enough for them to have rested several days, but Scott does not seem to have realized that their slow advance was caused by weakness. Moreover, there was a shortage of fuel. The cans containing oil had screw tops and leather gaskets. The leather disintegrated from low temperatures, and every depot contained less oil than had been planned. Even without this loss their ration was too low, and the slow progress from depot to depot gave them no opportunity to catch up on the supply.

Scott's affection for Oates grows more and more evident through this portion of his diary. Scott knew well the terrible suffering of his comrade—feeling the cold more than the others, hands and feet frostbitten so badly he could barely hobble along, but still insisting on doing his share. Bill Wilson suffered from snow blindness, and tough little Bowers, who had come to the expedition direct from service in India, was a tower of strength for them all.

The poor gallant fools did not know they were licked. Even with the help of a sail their marches fell off, and they blamed increasing friction of the runners rather than their steadily increasing

weakness.

On March 2 they reached the Middle Barrier depot and found even less oil than they had come to expect. Oates by this time was out on his feet, begged them to abandon him, but they went on and on. Each morning it took them hours to get set up and on the trail, but they still blamed it on the surface.

They began marching on a cold chunk of pemmican, pretending that they liked it better that way. On March 4, Scott wrote that things looked *very* black. Wilson's feet began to go bad, and both Scott and Bowers got frostbitten. On March 11, Wilson gave them all enough opium tablets so that each might elect a painless death at will, but none did.

On March 13, they woke to a strong northerly wind with temperature -37° . They remained in camp until two, and then struggled onward for $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Wilson was so cold he could not get off of his skis for some time—Scott and and Bowers set up the tent and made their tea. Oates got it again in the foot.

Poor Scott did not even then realize how terribly weakened he was. On Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17 (he did not know which) he made a long entry so that the facts about Oates would be known.

"Should this be found, I want these facts recorded. Oates' last thoughts were of his mother, but immediately before, he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death. We can testify to his bravery. . . . He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake, but he awoke in the morning—yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said 'I am just going outside and may be some time.' He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since."

Oates hoped to save his friends. This was the last act of a very gallant gentleman.



ON MARCH 18 Scott wrote that his right foot was gone. They were twenty-one miles from One Ton Camp, had given the Primus its last half fill of oil. Each man was pretending to the others that he was confident of getting through.

On the next day at lunch there is a short entry. Fifteen miles from the depot, two days' food, one days' fuel. All feet getting bad.

Amputation was the best any could hope for. Would the trouble spread? The wind did not give them a chance, strong from the north or northwest. Thermometer -40° .

They went on for four more miles and camped. On March 21, Wilson and Bowers planned a desperate sortie to the camp for fuel. Blizzards stopped them.

March 22 and 23 "Blizzard bad as ever . . . Wilson and Bowers unable to start . . . no fuel and only one or two of food left . . . have decided it shall be natural. . . ."

Outside the door of the tent remained a continuous swirl of snow and drift. On March 29, Scott wrote,

"I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end can not be far.

"It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more."

Scrawled across the bottom of the sheet, in weaker, shakier handwriting,

"Last entry. For God's sake look after our people."

Eight months later a searching party found them. Wilson and Bowers had their sleeping bags closed over their heads as if they had gone to sleep naturally and never wakened. Scott must have died later. His notebooks and letters were found carefully placed together. The flaps of his sleeping bag were thrown back, and his coat was open. One arm was flung over the body of his friend and comrade, Bill Wilson.

In his last hours Scott wrote letters

to the relatives of his companions, and to various friends and backers who had contributed to the expedition.

The searching party did not move their bodies. After reading burial service they covered the tent with a mighty mound of snow, surmounted by a cross. Beside it they buried a record sealed in a metal tube.

In three or four hundred years, when the Barrier has moved on to the edge of the sea they will be consigned to the deep with a salute more thunderous than could be given by all the navies in the world.

Somewhere near the other end of the globe lies the body of Roald Amundsen, who died as gallantly as Scott's comrade, Titus Oates.

The gruff Norwegian, who had so easily won Antarctica's richest prize, turned once more to his campaign against the Arctic. But the Arctic is a haughty opponent.

He failed in a projected drift across the Pole, getting caught in an eddy that kept him close to land. In 1925 he landed airplanes north of 87° , but had to return. The next year he completed a successful flight from Spitzbergen to Alaska, the first man to see both Poles. Then, while visiting the United States, loyalty to his old friend Dr. Cook cost him the backing of the National Geographic Society, and he worked his way back to Norway as a sailor.

In June, 1928, General Nobile crashed his dirigible on a polar flight, and was not heard from for several days. Nobile had been a shipmate of Amundsen's in the flight across the Pole. On June 17, the Norwegian left Bergen in an airplane to search for Nobile. He never returned.





*Spy for the
assassins—
and clever!*

THE JOSS OF TAI WONG

By ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

IT WAS the month of the Bitter Moon, and Tai Wong had reached a momentous decision. He had decided, however, to refrain from putting that decision into execution until Tsao Wang, the god of the kitchen and fire-side, had made his heavenly journey to report upon those spiritual things which had befallen Tai Wong during the past year, so that the gods might award to Tai Wong his just deserts for the ensuing twelve moons.

The past few months had not been prosperous for Tai Wong, but no hint of

that showed in the sacrifices which were made before the kitchen god, whose shrine behind the black stove was decorated with incense sticks, honey cakes, and candied fruits. Tai Wong was very shrewd, and well versed in the subtle trickeries by which the gods can be fooled. He had, therefore, devised various means to make certain that Tsao Wang would not speak ill of him.

In the first place, there was a pinch of opium sending up its pungent aroma under the nostrils of the god. This was to make him drowsy. And, as an addition-

al precautionary measure, and in accordance with the best Chinese customs, Tai Wong had painted the god's lips with honey. The drowsiness caused by the opium smoke would keep him from seeing too much and from saying too much. The honey on his lips would make his words sweet.

But, despite all these precautions, it would not be until Tsao Wang had joined the gods that Tai Wong would slip furtively down the narrow alleys until he came to the third house on the Street of the Sea Dragon.

It had taken Tai Wong much time to learn the secret of this house, a secret which was guarded with meticulous care. But Tai Wong was shrewd. He knew where to ask questions, and, more than all, he knew where and when to listen. And so he had found that one who wished to secure much gold could engage in certain barter in the third house on the Street of the Sea Dragon.

For ten years, there had been rivalry between Mah Jee and Tai Wong. Mah Jee had a general curio store upon one side of the Street of the Rat of Heaven, and Tai Wong a similar store on the other. Before the coming of the Japanese, there had been much business. And Tai Wong had secured the lion's share. *Sai yan* tourists, pouring forth from the ships to venture timidly into the streets of the Chinese city, had found it easy to gravitate into Tai Wong's store.

Upon one occasion, Tai Wong had surreptitiously bribed the city authorities to dig up the street in front of Mah Jee's place just as a big liner had eased its way into the dock. . . . *Ai-i-i yah!* That had been a great day! All of the tourists had thronged over to Tai Wong's side of the street. And Mah Jee standing disconsolate before the door of his shop, had fruitlessly implored the excavators to desist, had shouted that Tai Wong was a robber and a cheat. But Tai Wong had been too busy even to notice the vituperation. Silver coins had clinked into his coffers, and there had been the rustle of much paper money.

Then there had been the time when Mah Jee had sought to buy the luck charms of the Emperor K'ang Hsi, under whose direction the master calendar of

China had been prepared. Two golden discs they were, alike in every respect, symbolizing, in ornamentations of jade and gold, the Yin and Yang, principles of life, which, together, constitute Tao, the way, the eternal reason of heaven and earth, the origin of all things.



MAH JEE had possession of one of the charms. He had contracted for both, but Tai Wong, by clever machinations, had secured possession of the other. Tai Wong would have given much to get the other charm from Mah Jee. But better half a loaf than no bread at all. Mah Jee on the other hand wished to complete the talisman, and would go to great lengths to do so.

So the two rivals had split the luck charm of the famed emperor. Together their businesses had prospered. And now, with the advent of the Japanese, the droning of airplanes and the tramp of marching feet, their businesses had dwindled together.

But it would not be for long. This very night, as soon as Tsao Wang had been outwitted, Tai Wong would journey to the house in the Street of the Sea Dragon.

It came time to launch Tsao Wang on his heavenly journey. And the painted picture of the kitchen god with his horse tied behind him and his memory tablet in his hand—the tablet which would assist him in remembering what he was to report to the gods—was lifted gently from its niche behind the kitchen stove. Startled cockroaches slithered out from behind the resting place. Heavy, pungent opium smoke, and the thin, white smoke curling upward from incense sticks wreathed about the niche. Tsao Wang, his lips freshly smeared with honey, was escorted into the alleyway behind the house. A little fire was built. Tai Wong poured a glass of spirits over the portrait so that the god might be in a jovial humor when he made his report.

Amidst much ceremony, the picture of the god was consigned to the flames, starting him on his heavenly journey. Hay was placed on the fire so that Tsao Wang's horse might be fed, and then the

womenfolks threw dried peas on the kitchen roof, imitating the sound of the hoofs of the departing horse as it galloped away to the heavens.

Tai Wong lowered his eyes, lest the departing Tsao Wang should surprise the expression in them. After all, it was a simple matter for a prudent man to outwit the gods. Old Tsao Wang had betaken himself to heaven to make his report, his senses dulled by opium smoke, his stomach gorged with the delicacies of offerings, his lips smeared with honey, and his senses befuddled by wine. It was certain that he would fail to report those activities of Tai Wong which the curio dealer fain would conceal.



THE narrow street was dark, and all but deserted. Tai Wong walked with slow, shuffling feet past the entrance of the Street of the Sea Dragon. But a few steps to his left was the house he sought, yet there was no hurry. Time does not perish. First Tai Wong must make absolutely certain that there was no one to observe him.

For the patriotic Chinese had developed a new method of warfare. Those who were known to sympathize with Japan were, one by one, being marked for death by a mysterious squad of executioners which materialized silently out of the night, sent their victim to his ancestors, and then dispersed as mysteriously as the wraiths of fog drifting in from the Whangpoo.

These Guardians of the Liberties of China, as they called themselves, were coming to have more and more power. It was all very well to make concessions to the invaders, being assured thereby of influence and increasing business. But it was quite another matter to pay for those advantages with life itself, and within the last week, the Guardians of the Liberties of China had struck twice.

Three times Tai Wong passed the entrance of the Street of the Sea Dragon. There was no hurry. Patience in itself was a virtue. No one would see him enter. No one must see him leave. No one—He saw that the street was deserted. He turned down the Street of the Sea Dragon.

The third house was dark and somber. No lights were visible. For a moment, Tai Wong thought, with a feeling of futility, that the place was deserted. Could it be that he had gone to such elaborate preparations to fool Tsao Wang for nothing? Mechanically, he clutched at his luck charm, the talisman of K'ang Hsi.

A moment later he laughed at his fears. It was as though his arrival had been anticipated. A door swung silently open as he set his foot on the hewn stone step. A voice which spoke with a slight hissing of the silibants said, "Enter, and beware of the ghost-step."

Tai Wong bowed his head, entered, and groped with his feet, feeling for the ghost-step. Behind him the door slid smoothly shut, and an iron bar clanged into place.

The passage was straight, and lest some homeless ghost might wait outside to dart into the passage when the door was opened, the Chinese architects had planted a solid beam down the center of the floor, since it is a well-known fact that these homeless ghosts can travel only in straight lines, and any barrier across the floor will cause them to stub their toes.

As Tai Wong's feet encountered the obstacle and he prepared to step over it, strong hands grasped him from behind. He felt swift, strong fingers searching him for weapons, and then the hissing voice said, "Proceed."

Tai Wong saw a strip of light at the end of the passageway. He opened the door. A man sat before a desk in a room which held no windows. He was turning papers with thick, capable fingers, and he looked up as Tai Wong entered—a man whom Tai Wong had never seen before, a moon-faced individual with inscrutable eyes which blinked from behind horn-rimmed spectacles, a man who was curiously devoid of the polite indications of the Orient, and was filled with a crisp, businesslike efficiency which caused Tai Wong to forget the elaborate approach with which he had planned to lead up to his proposition.

"You have come," the man behind the desk said simply. "It has been told to me that you were coming."



TAI WONG bowed low, said, "I have come," and waited fruitlessly for the other to engage in those elaborate formalities in regard to seating which furnish a background for so much of bargaining in China, presenting the opportunity for many honeyed compliments and giving a shrewd bargainer an opportunity to measure the mental caliber of his opponent.

When there was not so much as an invitation to be seated forthcoming, Tai Wong went on. "I have come because I am a leader among my people, because I have many friends who look to me for guidance. Frequently, influential men ask me whether they should continue to wage warfare against invaders, or to co-operate in building up a solid front which would stretch—"

The man behind the desk interrupted him, not with the tones of the bargainer who seeks to skirt the extremes in order to reach the middle course, but in the voice of a man who has become accustomed to authority, a man who makes statements and does not permit those statements to be questioned. "You have come. It is well. There are two curio stores on the Street of the Rat of Heaven. There is but little business. Soon, however, ships will once more come to this port bringing tourists in numbers, rich *bak gwiee loe* whose pockets will be filled with money. At that time, there will be but one curio store on the Street of the Rat of Heaven, and your coffers will swell with money."

"It is not of the future that I worry, but of the present," Tai Wong said, losing somehow much of his assurance.

"Peace," the man behind the desk said crisply. "Do not interrupt. On next Monday an American ship comes to the port. On it there is a young woman whose face is very innocent. She has hair like the straw in the fields. Her eyes are of the color of the sky when it shows through a break in the clouds during a thunder storm. This woman is dangerous. She will be accompanied by an elderly gentleman whose face is Chinese and who will act as her guide. This gentleman will bring her into your store. She will carry with her a briefcase. You will

show her many curios. Your prices will be very low indeed. She will buy. When she leaves your store, her brief case will remain."

The man opened a drawer in his desk, and took from it a briefcase.

The briefcase was, Tai Wong knew, a masterpiece of cunning craftsmanship. It did not look new, nor did it look old. It had been hand tooled with the greatest precision. There were initials on it, "C. M.W." stamped in gilt, and the gilt paint had been worn just enough. The leather was shiny as from much usage. There were two slight spots on the leather.

"Her brief case," the man went on, "is an exact duplicate of this. When she leaves your store, she will take with her this briefcase. Her own briefcase will be in your possession. A messenger will be waiting in your back room. You will hand him the briefcase. When you have given it to him, you will receive two thousand dollars of Hongkong currency. And now you will receive five hundred dollars in Hongkong currency, and—" the eyes behind the thick tortoise-shell rimmed spectacles became suddenly hard and menacing—"you will not fail."

This was to Tai Wong's liking. There was now an opportunity to bargain. This was better than he had anticipated. A definite task awaited him. This man needed him and needed him badly.

"The money," he said, "is not enough. In my business, there is much profit. I could continue to remain in my store, selling only very limited merchandise, and still make more than you have offered to—"

The voice interrupted again. It was crisp and businesslike.

"You will do as I have instructed," the voice said. "You will receive two thousand Hongkong dollars. There will only be one curio store upon the Street of the Rat of Heaven. You will not fail, nor will we bargain. The price has been fixed. Take this briefcase and go."

The thick, capable fingers took from a drawer a sheaf of the huge, oversized bank notes which circulate in Hongkong, elaborately engraved masterpieces of the lithographer's art. As the stubby fingers peeled off twenty-dollar notes, Tai Wong tried again.

"I came here of my own free will," he said. "Business is bad, but I can wait until it gets better. I am not merchandise which is to be picked up from the counter. I—"

The eyes struck his with a forcible impact.

"You have come here," the man said. "That is enough. When you leave here, you leave either under our protection, or at your own risk."

There was a sudden dryness in the mouth of Tai Wong. He stretched forth his hand for the Hongkong currency, and his left hand sought the talisman in his pocket, the gold-jade symbol of Yin and Yang which seemed somehow to be a part of China, a China which was ageless in its wisdom, inscrutable in its dealings.

"You will not fail," the man behind the desk said. "Failure cannot be excused by words. In the code of my race, only blood washes away failure. That is all."

A squat, broad-shouldered man stepped forward from the darkness of the passageway, took Tai Wong's arm in the grip of steel, and said, "That is all."



COMING out of the house, into the Street of the Sea Dragon, Tai Wong glanced right and left to make certain no one was in sight.

Ai-i-i yah! This was not as he had anticipated. There was no opportunity to bargain. As the man behind the desk had so ruthlessly pointed out, once having entered that house, Tai Wong had no alternative. He realized that he was riding the tiger. Without thinking, he had bartered away his freedom to barter. He—

From the street which had seemed deserted, a ragged form rose to clutch at his elbows. "*Cumshaw! Cumshaw! Cumshaw!*" cried the stooped form in the whining voice of the professional beggar.

Swift fear chilled Tai Wong's heart. This was no beggar. The man had been too cleverly hidden in the shadows.

"*Cumshaw! Cumshaw! Cumshaw!*" cried the ragged, unkempt figure, circling in an attempt to see Tai Wong's face.

Tai Wong reached a sudden decision. He whirled and struck.

Tai Wong knew but little of the art of physical combat. Generally, he had fought after the age old Chinese custom in which men comment loud and long on the ancestry and peculiarities of an opponent until one or the other 'loses face' with the crowd which inevitably gathers. But the fury of terror made Tai Wong as a veritable whirlwind. His fists, striking out in frenzied, although ill-timed blows, beat the beggar to the gutter, and Tai Wong took to his heels, secure in the knowledge that he had kept the man from seeing his face.

Beggar indeed! Spy for the assassins—and clever! Tai Wong must be particularly careful to have no further contact with the house in the Street of the Sea Dragon. Hereafter let them come to him. And they would come to him—of that he had no doubt. He only wished that he had.

Not until he had reached the Bund did he slacken his pace, and then he reached in his pocket for the familiar talisman.

For a moment his brain failed to comprehend the message which was telegraphed to him from the tips of his groping fingers—the talisman was gone!

His mind, groping back over the events which had transpired there in the Street of the Sea Dragon, suddenly recalled a faint tinkle, a sound which had at the time been without significance, as though a button had been torn from the clothing of the beggar and had clinked to the stones.

Tai Wong stood still.

He dared not return to the Street of the Sea Dragon. Beyond doubt the sharp eyes of the spy had by this time located the talisman. Any curio dealer could identify it. *Ai-i-i yah!* Was this a sign that luck had deserted him? Had the talisman deliberately left his possession now that misfortune was about to overtake him? Or had he perhaps alienated the spell of the charm by seeking to betray China?

Was it for nothing that he had gone to such elaborate precautions to dull the senses of Tsao Wang before sending him to report to the Gods? Were the spies

of heaven as well as the spies of China in league against him?

A thought flashed into his mind, a thought of such sheer cunning, such diabolical ingenuity, that for a moment it seemed impossible for him to digest it. It was as though his eyes, straining in the darkness, had been suddenly blinded by a flash of light so brilliant that it dazzled.

Swiftly, Tai Wong set off down the Bund.



THE house of Mah Jee, as is so frequently the case with Chinese persons of wealth, presented an elaborate camouflage to the street. Apparently, three squalid, disreputable houses in the last stage of repair stood cheek-by-jowl, leaning one against the other for support.

But one had only to pass directly through these houses, and through a gate in a wall, to enter a sumptuous courtyard, back of which, completely hidden from the street, was the residence of Mah Jee, roomy, spacious, and comfortable, as befitted a wealthy curio dealer who took in much of the foreign-devil money. And there was a secret way through the wall, a way which was kept open by Mah Jee in order to admit those who had treasures to sell.

The treasures of the royal palace in Peiping have never been fully inventoried. Certain it is that huge quantities of these priceless museum pieces have been spirited from within the walls of the forbidden city to appear in some of the more favored curio shops, from which they eventually find their way to far shores. Obviously, a curio dealer does not obtain merchandise of this type by requiring that all visitors shall undergo the watchful scrutiny of the Sikh guard who watches over the safety of wealthy Chinese.

Tai Wong had a secret passage of his own. Moreover, he had made it his business to learn of the secret passage of Mah Jee. This had not been particularly difficult, since the purveyors of stolen treasures, being far too clever to sell their entire offerings to one dealer, had called upon Tai Wong as well as Mah Jee.

Tai Wong paused before what was apparently a solid wall. It took him some little time to find the secret entrance, and to traverse the passageway on silent feet.

Nor, when he had traversed it, did he emerge into the sedan-chair chamber. Instead he melted into the shadows, and moved upon noiseless feet up the stone stairs.

Mah Jee was out, and Tai Wong hid in the shadows, waiting, waiting patiently while the silent-winged Chinese mosquitoes which flit noiselessly, never raising over an inch or two above the floor, surreptitiously bit his ankles until they swelled into throbbing misery.

But Tai Wong waited with the patience of the Oriental, until at last Mah Jee returned home. Tai Wong continued to wait until the house was silent.

Thereafter Tai Wong went into silent action, and his courage was the courage born of desperation. He moved as silently as one of the soft flying *mun jie* themselves until his hands, searching through the clothes of Mah Jee, found that which he sought.

Ai-i-i yah! It was well that the great emperor had had two identical talismans of luck!



IT WAS the next afternoon when Tai Wong received the caller whom he had expected all day. The man was obsequious, a student, he proclaimed, of the ancient order, an admirer of the great emperor under whose reign so much had been done for the Chinese calendar.

Tai Wong watched him with expressionless countenance and eyes as smoothly black as a snake's tongue. He knew only too well what was coming, but there was naught in the expression of his face which indicated it.

The student had heard that Tai Wong had a talisman, a gold-jade symbol of Yin and Yang, that which had brought luck to the great emperor, a treasure priceless in itself not only for its own intrinsic value but for its associations. And, because Tai Wong held such a priceless memento of the great emperor, could the student perhaps feast his eyes upon it?

Tai Wong did not hesitate. It was a pleasure to accommodate one who looked with such reverence and respect upon the memory of a great ruler. Tai Wong, indeed, had such a talisman. It was so sacred that he never let the public gaze fasten upon it. But under the circumstances—

The man leaned forward to examine that which lay in Tai Wong's cupped palm.

Ai-i-i yah! There it was, valuable indeed, priceless. Its possession brought honor to Tai Wong. Might it also bring him sons as numerous as the sands, riches in abundance. And when the time came that Tai Wong must join his ancestors, might the *feng shui* find for him a propitious resting place for his descendants and proper time to inter the remains.

And the student was gone.

Tai Wong shuffled back to his living quarters, walked to the smoke-blackened niche behind the stove where the new image of the Tsao Wang, which was to preside over the destinies of his hearth for another year, was hung.

"O God of the Hearth," he said, "I am indeed poor, and my hovel is an unworthy abode for you. This rice which is placed before you is of an inferior grade, but soon you shall have better rice, much incense, and occasionally a bit of the smoke of a *peck yen* to soothe your senses."

And Tai Wong made a bow so that the gods should not see the mockery of his smile. After all, it was easy to fool these gods who acted as spies of heaven.

No later than tonight, Mah Jee would walk out, never to return. As was so widely known, there were but two of the talismans of K'ang Hsi. Mah Jee might just as well have left his calling card at the house in the Street of the Sea Dragon—might indeed have written his own invitation to death.

More and more Tai Wong decided that he would like to see that which was to happen. Mah Jee had long been a source of irritation. It would be a pleasure to see him embark upon the journey to his ancestors. Moreover, by following him carefully, it was possible that Tai Wong could obtain

some clue as to the identities of these assassins. Surely such information would be of value to the man who lived in the house on the Street of the Sea Dragon. And this was information which could be bargained for, specific information to be sold at a price. No more would the man with the ominous eyes tell Tai Wong what he was to do and how much he was to receive. Tai Wong would be the one to set the price, and the man with the ominous eyes would pay, and pay well.

Tai Wong stopped his ricksha in the street beyond Mah Jee's house. On foot, Mah Jee might have half a dozen means by which he could leave his house, but by ricksha there was only one. He—Tai Wong leaned forward to clap his hands at his coolie.

"He comes," he cried sharply. "Keep well back, but follow."



WITH a strumming of rubber tires, a glittering of light from nickeled spokes, the ricksha of Mah Jee went whirling past, and Tai Wong's coolie grunted as he leaned into the shaft to start the ricksha into swift motion.

They ran swiftly through the night. Tai Wong's coolie ran far back in the shafts, so that the weight of his passenger lifted him somewhat from the ground. He ran with a long, easy stride while the light vehicle, skimming along on rubber tires and sensitive springs, followed noiselessly.

Mah Jee went into the restaurant of the golden fish.

It was well. The public could enter the golden fish or leave it at will.

Tai Wong sat in the ricksha and waited.

At length he saw them—dark, ominous shadows materializing as from nowhere, men who walked, not with the slipshod carelessness of the Chinese who lets his slippers drag along the ground under his feet, but with the stealth of men who move toward the accomplishment of a secret purpose.

And yet Tai Wong waited. He wanted to make certain.

The moving shadows vanished into the courtyard in the rear of the restaurant. The diners ate on, in ignorance of

that which impended. Tai Wong could hear the clatter of conversation, the shrill, high-pitched twanging voice of a sing-song girl, could hear the—*Bang, bang! . . . Bang, bang, bang! . . . Bang, bang!*

The shots rang out in quick succession. There were screams from the restaurant. People on the thoroughfare surged toward the sound of the shots, then fell back, to surge forward once more.

Tai Wong squeezed the stolen luck talisman in his fingers. *Ai-i-i yah!* He was smart! Tsao Wang had indeed made a good report to the Gods. His senses stupified with opium, his mouth smeared with honey, his brain flushed with alcohol, he had ascended on his horse to report to the gods that the household of Tai Wong was particularly deserving of special favors.

And now Mah Jee was dead. There would indeed only be one curio store in which the tourists could throng. There would be no further necessity for bribing officials to dig up the streets in front of Mah Jee's door when boats should arrive from May Gwoh.

Tai Wong could not resist alighting from his ricksha and shuffling forward to join the crowd. Then, impelled by a curious desire to look upon the result of his cunning, he permitted himself to be swept forward with the first vanguard of venturesome souls who climbed the stairs.

All about him he heard a babble of sounds—"Guardians of the Liberties of China—killed as he ate in the restaurant—their faces were veiled that no one might see. *Ai-i-i yah!* They are welcome, those devils who take the money of invaders to betray China!"

Tai Wong was pushed along by the crowd behind him, now suddenly grown bold. He entered the main dining room. The shooting had been here. A little knot of people gathered at the far end of the room gave him the information he needed. The victim had been dining in one of the enclosed private rooms.

Tai Wong composed his face into an expressionless mask. Hands up his sleeve, he shuffled forward to look down upon the dead face of Mah Jee, his rival.

What was this? It was not Mah Jee! It was—the man who lived in the third house on the Street of the Sea Dragon, the man with the horn-rimmed spectacles and the ominous eyes—eyes which were ominous no more.

And then suddenly, as junks scurry for safety when the first breath of the typhoon ruffles the surface of the bay, the crowd ran madly toward the exit. Someone cried, "*Fahn jin t'ow!* They return!"

Tai Wong was still curious. He glanced swiftly at the exits. They were blocked. People swirling around like dead leaves before an autumn wind were jamming every available doorway. Tai Wong stepped back against the wall door, standing motionless, hoping that he would receive some clue as to the leader of these assassins.

He heard the sound of pounding feet on the back staircase. Five men, their faces covered, their gloved hands holding glistening weapons, poured into the room. The crowd screamed in terror, pellmelled down the stairs out into the night.

Tai Wong was cool. He looked at the leader, seeking something by which he could be recognized.

And then suddenly the leader saw him, and swung toward him.

Tai Wong said swiftly, "Peace, Oh Guardians of the Liberties. I am a friend."

"Ah yes," the leader said.

There was something vaguely familiar about his voice, and then, as though to remove all doubt, the leader raised the black cloth which hung down, concealing his features.

Tai Wong's mouth went suddenly dry. The man was Mah Jee.

Tai Wong turned to run. The guns crashed when he was still a good ten feet from the stairs.

In Tai Wong's kitchen, Tsao Wang, the god of the hearth and messenger sent to the gods to report upon the affairs of mortals, stared placidly into space, while smoke from the incense sticks eddied up about his throne and cockroaches nibbled at the sacrificial sweetmeats which had been placed before him by the smirking Tai Wong.



*Joe got himself a horse
and rode furiously away.*

BADLANDS TRAIL

By GORDON MacCREAGH

NOBODY ever knew why so hard looking a citizen as Joe Salvi suddenly mounted a horse and went flogging down the old Badlands trail and never came back, leaving his nice little business and everything.

It was just like the bad old days of Deadwood, when rustlers, hold-up men, and such would find it healthier for themselves to leave town in a hurry.

Clem Hobart, the police chief, didn't know any reason. Not yet. He was harboring a suspicion, no more, that the

man might have been laying low from a misfired racket deal in Chicago. But that was only because he just naturally suspicioned any stranger who would buy out a little old stationery store near the post office and brag that he would show these hicks how to run a business.

But it took time and quiet investigation to prove up on empty suspicions. Those woolly days were all gone when wild Westerners could run an Eastern dude out of town just because of his snide store clothes.

Nowadays, people who were in a sudden hurry left town in a fast automobile. Not, Chief Hobart grinned, that it did them much good, since all you had to do was telephone the next chief down the road. But he had no reason to telephone about anything.

Least of all did Rose Ann Ballew ever guess that her innocent return from an Eastern college was the direct cause of Joe's flight.

Rose Ann was old Hoke Ballew's granddaughter. All gold and tan and laughing blue and pouting red she was, and many a brash young citizen wondered how so much charm could ever have come down from a gnarled old timber-line pine like Hoke. Only the brash-est of them wouldn't have liked to have the old-timer know them think it.

Grampaw Ballew lived up back of Moriah Steep somewhere. Very few people knew just where. This younger generation had no heart for hiking the craggy trail, but the leathery old man was as tough-limbed as a tree and made it a matter of routine to bring Rose Ann in for a monthly shopping of flour and bacon—though that was before he grew rich enough to send her away to college.

It was a tough hike back over the ridge for dancing adolescent feet, and Grampaw would often enough lead Rose Ann into Moriah cemetery for a rest. It was the old man's peculiarity—and his only pride—that his limp always became quite noticeable in the cemetery.

He would sit on the weather-browned slab and lean his obsolete squirrel rifle against the headstone of Slim Jason Dole. But he reckoned old Jason wouldn't mind, because, sitting so, they were right at the foot of the low black iron fence that enclosed a crude slouch-hatted figure that a local stone cutter fondly imagined to resemble Wild Bill Hickok.

Grampaw would talk half to Rose Ann and half to Bill.

"Dang all take you, Bill," he would grumble. "This chunk o' lead o' your'n stiffens up on me, come years."

Rose Ann would fidget. "Grampaw, you've told me a million things about the old days, but you've never said what you and Bill fought about."

Grampaw Ballew's fierce white eye-

brows would always screw up in perplexity.

"Doggone effen I rightly know now what it wur 'tween me 'n Bill that time. Like enough some dance hall queen. Bill, he wur plain human when Calamity wasn't there a watchin' of him."

Over to the right, past the iron fence, another battered work of frontier art marked the last sleep of Calamity Jane, close enough to keep watch through the dead years.

"More'n once I asked Bill, too. But effen he remembered he wouldn't ever say, less'n Calamity mought come to hear. Though Bill he wor skeered o' nothin' else that walked."

The old man knew very well that Rose Ann was amply rested. But he loved to reminisce with his old friends in Moriah. "Shouldn't have ever tangled with Bill. He wur chain lightnin' with a Colt. But effen it'd been rifles I'd taken him. An' you know it, Bill. 'Member we wur on posse arter a hoss thief named Sam an' you bet me yore Dakotah bead vest—"

"Yes, yes, Grampaw." If Rose Ann didn't break it up the old memories would have run on for an hour. "Everybody knows you won the vest and that you never go out after a deer but you bring it in—and I'm telling you again that the game warden has his eye on you till October. Come along home. I'm not tired."

"Ain't brung us a deer in months," Grampaw would grumble. "And cattridges is too expensive fur to go missin' things." And he would exaggerate his limp, going out, for Bill to see. "Dang all take you, Bill."



BUT that was before he found the little pocket of free placer dust that every old prospector dreams about in some lost mountain gulch. No banker's fortune, of course, but enough.

"Doggone," said Grampaw Hoke. "Cain't read nor write ary scratch myself—an' like enough that's why my eyes is still good over a front sight. But I ain't never helt agin them as could. I reckon, Rose girl, it's time you polished up yore schoolin' in one o' these here now dude colleges, nor ary young lady in

both Dakotas should have better."

So Rose Ann hugged him, "come nigh bust'n a rib," and went East. And that innocent happening was the beginning of smart city slicker Joe Salvi's end.

When Grampaw Ballew's next shopping date was due he went first to the assay office, and from the assay office to the post office, and from the post office to Joe Salvi's stationery store next door. He laid down a money order blank and a dollar. Belligerently, to forestall shameful questioning, he demanded, rather than asked:

"Young feller, you'll oblege me by fill-in' out this here form an' writin' a couple lines o' letter." He leaned his old rifle against the counter, meticulously careful that nothing should bump the front sight.

That was an easy enough job for a dollar. "Sure thing."

"Fill the blank out to Miss Rose Ann Ballew in Boston an' make it fur a hundred, an' write her—aw, jes tell her I'm right spry an' the claim's assayin' up to expectations an' she'd better buy her some clothes an gew-gaws, an'—well, jes' put in some fancy words, young feller, an' meanwhile I'll step back to the post office n' git the money order fur ye to send with 'em."

At the money order window the old man pushed in his blank and his hundred dollars. The clerk scribbled busily. "Twenty-two cents fee," he said, without even looking up.

"An' a three cent stamp, please." said the old man.

"Two windows down," said the clerk. "Next."

Grampaw came back to Joe with the blue money order slip. "Beats all, don't it," he grinned conversationally, "how simple an' safe old Uncle Sam sends money these days? In my time it used to be pony express, an' take yore chance o' a hold-up, at that."

"Yeah," Joe Salvi looked at the old man wonderingly. "Simple, yeah, and safe. Where d'ya get all this dough, old-timer?"

Grampaw's fierce white brows came down over eyes as piercing as Uncle Sam's eagle.

"Reckon there is folks in this town,"

he ruminated, "mought try t' trail me back to my washin's. Yessir, mought be one or two'd try it. But they'd have to be knowin' a heap o' backwoods craft." He nodded his grim conviction to himself. "Thank'ee, young feller. I'm obleeged. Now you jest write me a envelope an' I'll mail it myself. Thankee. I'll be doin' business with ye agen."

He took his rifle and stalked out. Joe looked after him and scratched thoughtfully at the back of his neck.



THE next time Grampaw came in for his bacon and flour there was a letter for him in the post office. He brought it in to Joe and planked a dollar down with it.

"That'll be from my little girl out East. Ain't nob'dy else be writin' old Hoke. Jes' you tell me whata she says, young feller."

The letter said. "Grampaw darling" and "Thank you millions" and "I'm just loving it here" and sundry other little chitchat; and it added a sage note of warning. "I really don't need so much money; and both of us know, Grampaw, that a pocket of gold can peter suddenly out. So just you hoard it."

Grampaw laughed. "It ain't peterin' yit. You write her, young feller, there's goin' to be more before there'll be less, an' I'll step in an' git me a money order blank."

Joe Salvi had had a lot of time to think about this confiding old-timer who couldn't read but who knew that money was so safe with Uncle Sam. And city Joe was very smart. "How much?" he was very casual to ask the old man, pen poised over the blank.

"Make it a hundred, same's last time. Ain't allowin' to have no Eastern ladies look sideways on my little girl."

So smart city Joe filled in the blank for a hundred dollars and he made it out, not for Rose Ann Ballew in Boston, but for Jake Monaco in Chicago. And the busy clerk in the post office duly copied it right off the application blank and scribbled out the blue money order slip for Jake Monaco.

It was as simple as that.

"Write her," Grampaw told Joe. "Purt-

ty well, same's before. I'm lookin' fine, an' see she has a good time along with gittin' her a eddication."

And Joe wrote the letter to Jake: "Cash this on fifty-fifty split. Safe as a church. I got a gold mine. A sucker working it for me. If I watch my step it'll hold out to carry us along till things blow over a bit." And smoothly he addressed the envelope to Jake, and with a sudden access of courtesy even stuck the three-cent stamp onto it.

"Thankee," said Grampaw Ballew. "I'm obleeged. I'll mail it."

As long as he mailed it himself the old man knew that Uncle Sam thenceforth took charge of delivering the blue money slip to his girl.

It was as safe as all that, and as simple. And Joe Salvi was very smart. He watched his step. When the old man was gone he wrote to Rose Ann in Boston. "My darling little girl," he began, and he went on to tell her, all right, since she didn't need any money right away, Grampaw would be careful, because nobody knew better than himself how a gold pocket could peter out, but here was ten dollars anyhow to go along with.

And then he swore viciously to himself. "Damn, I shoul'da wrote Jake ten was out for expenses." But that omission was easily repaired. Joe had education. Writing letters was no bother to him—not at that price.

The next time Grampaw came in with his remittance blank all that Joe had to do was ask: "A hundred, I suppose?" And while Grampaw was getting the money order he wrote: "The sucker mine is holding out fine. Twenty out for expenses this time." And the old man trustfully mailed the envelope into Uncle Sam's care; and Joe wrote to Rose Ann: "Like you said, the pocket isn't doing so well; but here's twenty, and don't let my little girl worry; there'll be more."

Very shrewdly was Joe watching his step and nursing his mine along. And the next time again there was a letter for Grampaw; a brave little letter. "Don't let anything worry you, Grampaw," it said. "I'll make out all right till your luck turns. In college a girl can always help out, waiting on table and so on."

And Joe translated the letter—he had to be very smart to make it look like he was reading it right off.

"Having a wonderful time," he read, "and er—darling generous Grampaw, if you could, just this time—there's a lot of expenses; books and er—things?" Joe was not very well acquainted with the kind of expenses that might accrue in colleges.

Grampaw laughed. "Fill the blank for a hundred fifty. My little girl don't have to be wantin' for anythin'. Plenty where this come from."

Safer than a church it was. All that Joe had to do was to watch his step and translate the letters with just the right balance of shrewdness, and his sucker mine was practically bottomless.



THE letters that followed remained brave, but a pitiful note couldn't help creeping in. If tuition money were not forthcoming there was a limit to how long a girl could remain in an expensive eastern college. Joe didn't hold with diverting any tuition money away from his partner Jake. Instead, he began to inquire cautiously around as to what kind of expenses might a girl in a Boston college legitimately hang onto a fondly generous grandfather. And each new thing he learnt about, he glibly translated into each desperately brave letter from the college—he used to practise the sentences to himself aloud so that he could read them right out without any hesitation. And Grampaw duly got the blue money order slips and Uncle Sam safely and surely delivered every one of them to Jake in Chicago. Though it galled Joe frightfully to have to send a five of his own every now and then to Rose Ann in order to maintain just the right balance and keep her safely where she was.

Till the pitiful letter came to say that Rose Ann had reached and passed the limit. She had been compelled to leave college. But it was still brave. Grampaw need not worry. She had found herself one of those jobs that was open to an unfinished college girl. She was a maid in a suburban home, and the people were quite nice to her.

Brave, but anybody could read the heartbreak between the lines. Anybody but smart Joe Salvi. He could hardly hold his chuckles in. To Grampaw Ballew he said: "She says she's figuring on taking up a couple of vacation period studies to stack up some credits"—Joe had picked up quite a little bit of what went on in colleges, "So if it's okay with you, she won't be coming home for quite a bit yet."

Grampaw was disappointed, of course, but you had to pay a price and make your sacrifices for education. Grampaw went into the post office and got his blue slip for the price.

When he was gone to mail the safe and sure envelope to Jake, Joe let himself go.

"Gawdamighty!" he shouted, and rocked back on his heels with mirth. "It's a cinch! In a job like that she'll never have dough enough to come home; and so long as I watch my step—" He steadied himself to write to Rose Ann a plausible explanation of Grampaw's penury. "And I guess we can afford her ten bucks this time." He was generous.

"My darling little girl," he wrote. "My old heart is nigh broke that I have not been able to do any better by you. But, like you said the pocket has petered mighty thin; and my rheumatism has come back on me so bad I can hardly limp around to get any work done."

He wrote a lot more—about courage and be sure to hold on tight where she had a job and a roof over her head, and the luck would some day change. Joe grinned as he wrote. Watching his step, he would be able to postpone that day to a far and indefinite future. And since he read all the letters he would know exactly when and just how the profitable game would be drawing to its inevitable end and he would have plenty of time to make his getaway. A slick idea to add to that, he thought shrewdly, would be to overstock his silly little stationery store on the longest term credits he could get. The hell he'd care about abandoning it.

But that was where smart city Joe Salvi made his misstep, that last clever letter. Rose Ann read it and, "That settles it," she said. Her blue eyes froze

to cold ice and her red lips closed in a tight line, so that you could easily see she was old Hoke Ballew's little girl.

"That settles it. I've suspicioned for a long time there was something funny about all this. Grampaw's never had a day's rheumatism in his life, and if his leg hurt him he'd be boasting to the whole world it was because of Wild Bill. I'm headed for home right now."

And in these modern days a girl who had no money didn't have to beg hopelessly at the ticket office of a heartless railroad corporation. A girl who was brave and knew how to take care of herself in the Western mountain country could hitch hike.



SO THAT was how Joe Salvi came to hear with terrifying suddenness: "Old Hoke Ballew's girl came home from East this morn. Seen her hikin' over hill like she'd never bin gone." And that was why Joe, who knew all about a police chief's alarming habit of telephoning down the road to the next chief, got himself a horse and rode furiously away where there were no roads.

Nor any too soon. Grampaw Hoke Ballew came dropping down Moriah hill like a fierce eagle on the swoop. He crashed his rifle butt against smart city Joe's store door, but it was already open.

Old Pop Lantry, sitting on the out-curve of the post office steps, ruminative over a toothless chaw, hailed him.

"He up 'n gawn, Hoke, nor left never no note for good-by. Took him a hoss 'n went floggin' like the devil to his tail. Nor chief Clem Hobart don't know whut fur."

"Which way'd he took out, Pop?" said Grampaw through grim lips.

"Durn if that wurn't funny too, Hoke. Took th' old Badlands trail. Dang if I c'n figure why an East'ner 'd want to take the trail. Ain't nothing thar 'ceptin' deer an' mebbe a b'ar, an' them outen season." Pop spat and chawed on into reminiscence. "Many's a time you'n me, Hoke, we put th' houn dawgs in by Injun Swamp an' laid us up fur a long shot on a ole buck whur th' trail breaks into open fur jes a second tuh cross Red Hawg Crick."

Grampaw's whistling breath was like a white head eagle's cry spying out its hunting high above the mountain tops.

"An' you an' me, Pop," he said with very clear enunciation, "we know the short cut to the crick, spang over the ridge."

"Shore do, us ol' timers— Hey, Hoke! Whur to?"

"Huntin'," was all that Hoke said over his shoulder.

"Watch yore step, Hoke," Pop quavered after him. "Warden Henkel kinder don't allow as our deer belongs t' us ol' timers outen season."

"Never missed me a step in these mountains yit," Hoke called back bleakly. "Nor a deer." And his long strides hurried him away, nor would anybody know that he ever had a limp.

But he was tired enough, when he got home that evening to be limping quite perceptibly. Rose Ann scolded him with pretty authority.

"Now you sit right down, Grampaw, and if you've got any explanations I want to hear them. What do you mean,

grabbing your old gun and rushing off hunting the minute I come home? There's plenty to eat in the house. And if you went hunting, where's your deer?"

"Didn't see no deer." Grampaw said wearily, but no disappointment was in his keen old eyes.

Rose Ann took the rifle, gave an experienced sniff at its muzzle, and raised fond accusing eyes. "You wouldn't try to fool an innocent college girl from the East, would you?" She pressed a finger tip to the rifle muzzle and half turned. A little black circle marked her pink skin, where a clean gun should have shown only a thin film of oil.

"Don't tell me, Grampaw—" Rose Ann was shocked, "—that you're getting so old that you shot at a deer and missed."

Old Hoke Ballew's tired smile was grim.

"Not that old," he said. "I didn't see no deer. I jes' allowed we got money enough now in my diggin's so I c'd afford to waste me a cattridge long range on no more'n a hydrophoby skunk."



TRAIL AHEAD



A FOG-BLANK night, a crash, silence, a submarine gone to her doom, unless a handful of men working at suicidal depths could free her—that's the story and the drama of Commander Edward Ellsberg's "Men Under the Sea," which features next month's issue. It's a fact piece more thrilling than fiction, by a man who himself risked his life in the gallant attempt to save the ill-fated S4.

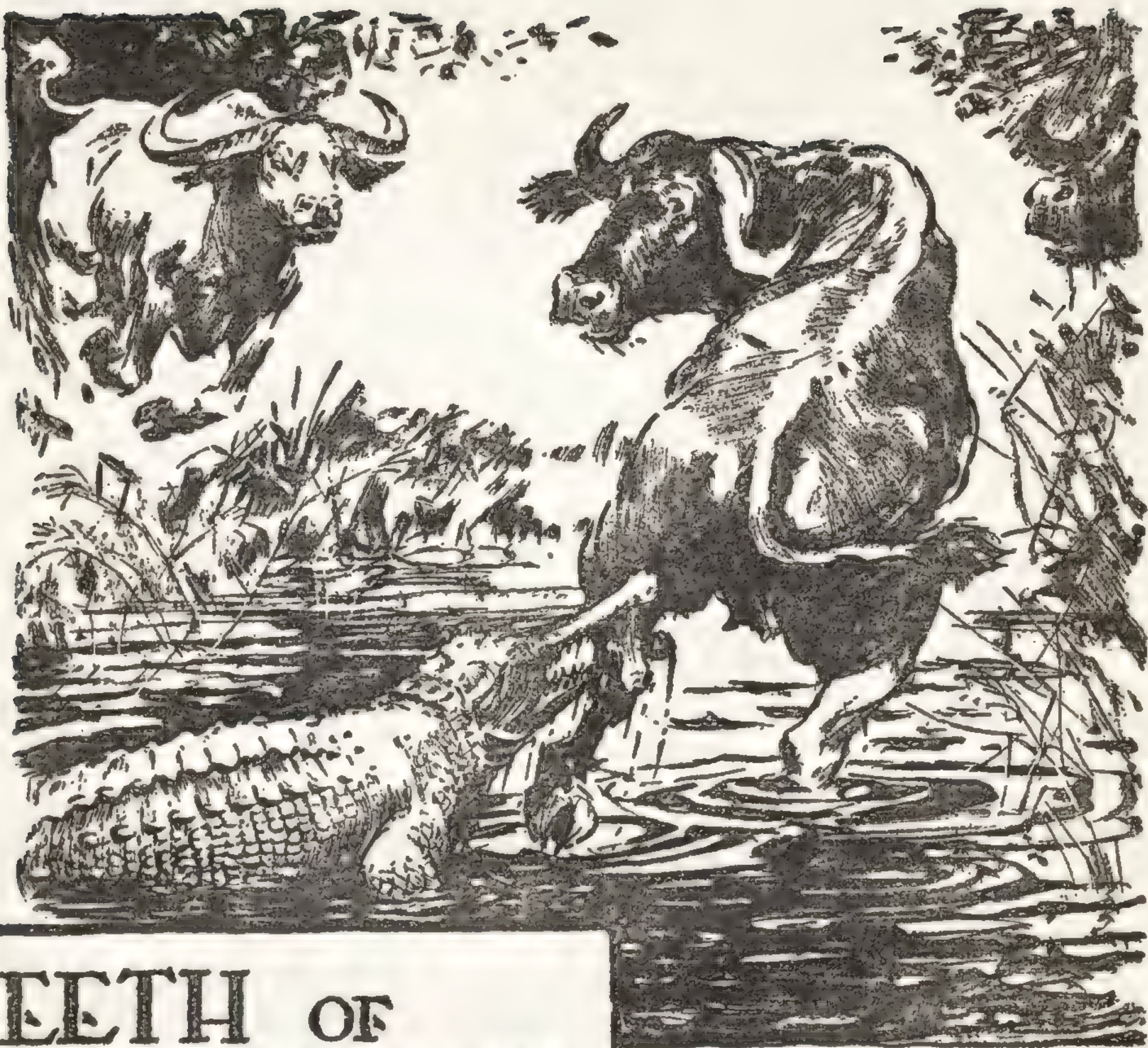
in the same issue

"SUNSHINER," by Arthur Carhart and C. C. Staples, a novelette wherein is shown that a white man never goes completely native, if he has a fighting heart to start with. And Arthur Friel's "Quixote" is a vivid story of the Venezuela badlands, featuring a certain man named Dugan who is well known to all of our readers. O. B. Myers writes a breath-taking story of courage in the air, "Suicide Club," and John Bonniwell goes out to meet Texas vengeance in the third installment of Frank Gruber's "Peace Marshal." And there are other fact and fiction headliners, bringing the world's frontiers closer to those who gather around our camp-fire.

Adventure

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TEETH OF TERROR

by
ANTHONY RUD

Crunch.
His jaws met living meat.

IN THE highlands of northern India, where the Alaknanda River proceeds leisurely in a series of broad shoals and deep pools, a sculptured mud bank presented the odd appearance of warts.

Each wart was about sixteen inches high, two feet in diameter, and colored yellowish brown. Inside, each wart was filled with rotting leaves, decaying carrion—and from sixty to ninety eggs, each about the size of a goose egg.

It was warm inside each wart, although at this northern point, in the foothills of the highest mountains of the world, the Alaknanda itself was surprisingly cold. The decomposing vegetable and animal matter packed around each setting of eggs produced the heat to hatch. The great mother gavial lacked

this warmth in her own cold-blooded body, but she knew well from instinct how to procure it for her eggs.

She lay in the mud a few yards away, almost concealed. Along the bank were other twenty-foot saurians. These gavials were much like true crocodiles, except they were larger, colored with more yellowish green on the backs, had longer, slimmer muzzles—and far more fearsome teeth.

These were the demons of the Sacred Ganges, into which the Alaknanda flows. They are the undertakers for northern India, and the scavengers. Also, next to cobras and above tigers, they are the greatest threat to human life in all that humid, teeming, steaming land.

The little sliver gavial we may call Gaur emerged from one of the deepest

and warmest of the underground eggs, and immediately squirmed his way out from a crevice in the baked mud wall of the wart. He reached the cooler ooze, where his solicitous mother was collecting her progeny of this batch.

For a short while she would take care of them. She would regurgitate food, almost digested. And she would fight off other mother gavials who would like very much to devour anyone else's saurian children.

Also, if a wicked little mongoose came—that tiny spitfire of an ichneumon who spends his depraved life doing little but killing hamadryad cobras, eating crocodile and gavial eggs, and doing his best to slay saurians of all sizes—the mother gavial, for the only time in her life, would fight the menace. And then of course she would die. Ichneumons know the one vulnerable part of this armored monster—the eye. So they attack the eyes, dig there with sharp claws, and blind the big, threshing creature.

Blindness means death to any denizen of the wild. Of course many a mongoose dies in the jaws of intended victims; but sympathy does not go often to a professional killer. He must take his chances, and die unmourned.

Gaur was about the size of an ordinary pencil, pointed at both ends. His short legs were relatively further apart than the underpinning of a dachshund, but right from the first breath of chilly air, he was lively. He was born with a terrific appetite, and preferred his meat extremely high. That was fortunate, since his mother let hers get good and ripe under water before she ate it. And the process of predigesting it for her young scarcely helped matters, except from a strictly gavial point of view.

For two weeks Gaur was not allowed much freedom. His huge mother made swift forays for food, but she penned him, with his swarming and slithering brothers and sisters, in a walled mud prison first. It generally took them an hour or two to dig themselves into the open.

If any did escape to try the water of the river on their own—well it was just too bad for them. In the Alaknanda lurked all manner of voracious fish, slaveringly anxious to dine heartily on tender

young reptile. But since each hatching of eggs provides a large family, mother gavial grieved not at all over the little lost lizards who had been too reckless. She would raise some, and that was all that mattered.



AT ABOUT four weeks of age, after his first few days of straight food properly decomposed in a mud cache under water, Gaur felt the urge of the itching foot. Itching tail perhaps would be more proper, since he swam much more with that powerful member than with his feet. He had elongated swiftly, and the first rows of his many sets of teeth were gleaming like white darning needles in his brown-black gums.

Each needle tooth fits into a sheath ready and waiting for it in the opposite jaw.

One fact should be explained about these teeth, which are the omnipresent terrors of the Sacred Ganges. Every now and then the absolutely fearless gavial, in his adult life, tackles some enemy like an elephant, which refuses to be pulled under the surface of the water and drowned. The elephant escapes—and in the flesh and skin of his leg or trunk there may be ten or twenty needle teeth from the mouth of the ambitious reptile.

Do not pity the gavial. He has plenty more teeth. At any time a dead gavial is examined, there are three, sometimes four complete sets of teeth, one above the other in the gums, ready to grow out rapidly when needed.

Our young friend Gaur felt the urge to travel. He tried to slither into the water, and was knocked spinning. His mother lashed out with her powerful tail whenever he tried to escape, and held him back another two weeks. Meanwhile she taught Gaur and the two dozen remaining of the brood how to catch their own small game, bury it in the mud, let it ripen—and this process was much like that of Dutch cheese makers, who bury their choicest round cheeses, burlap wrapped, for months under the floor of the cow byre, so that the strong ammonia flavor is secured.

Then one day Gaur escaped and went downriver. By night he lurked in the

underbrush, waiting for small live things he could conquer and drag down. He traveled by easy stages, sometimes remaining for a week or ten days in some spot where food was plentiful. He was growing fast in length and weight, though he was by no means safe as yet in the deeper pools and eddies of the river.

There was a strong and curious instinct in him. It was an urge which must have been similar to that of the salmon, which travels upstream hundreds of miles to spawn in the creek trickle where it was born. Gaur felt that he had to travel far, but at first the instinct was not strong enough to make him buck the frothing upstream surge of the Alaknanda.

It is one of the curious hegiras of nature. Perhaps there may be some subtle difference in the taste or temperature of the waters of the Alaknanda and Ganges rivers, since hundreds and thousands, perhaps millions of gavials, do about the same thing each year. They are creatures of the Ganges, and except for egg laying and raising of broods, they do not stay in other streams to any extent. Not even in the high tributaries. It is a rare exception when a male gavial over ten feet in length is found anywhere except on the Ganges River in the lower half of its length.



INDIA is the land of religious human pilgrims—and it is a quaint thought that the gavials gravely ape this custom of men. Gaur was slightly more than three feet in length, and a little more than one year old, when he reached the Deo Prayag, end of the Alaknanda as a separate river. Here, at the confluence of mighty streams, Gaur tasted for the first time the water of the Holy Ganges. It seemed to have a peculiar effect upon him.

Though in this upstream part the mountain current was even swifter than that of the Alaknanda, Gaur did not float with it and go downstream. Instead, he loitered in the mud of the swamp which borders one shore. Right across the Ganges was one of the great holy places for human pilgrims. Thousands of brown-

skinned Indians journeyed here weekly to cleanse themselves of dirt, disease and sin. And of course this was a gathering place for all ambitious half grown gavials, who hungered.

While each batch of pilgrims bathed, a guarding ring of priests stood outside them, breastbone deep in the water. Each priest had wooden tongs six feet long. Clamped in the jaws of each pair of tongs was a *bhani*. This was an eighteen inch stake sharpened at each end. Let a gavial swim up, open his jaws to take a bite at some succulent looking human, and all of a sudden a vertical stake would be whisked between his gapping jaws.

When he crunched down there would be one very sick gavial, threshing away to die, probably from starvation. The Hindus do not believe in killing, but they have seen too many of their babies snatched away by gavials to balk at this means of protection, which is much more cruel than well placed rifle bullets.

Gaur was still too small to dream of attacking men. He felt the travel urge, and turned upstream. Week in, week out, he went by spurts, traveling a few miles, then resting to eat his fill before resuming his strange hegira.

When once this journey is done, the gavials become sluggish. They drift down, looking and acting much like logs except when food presents itself.

Months passed. Gaur was six feet long, and getting far upstream. The water had been getting steadily colder. Here was the high plateau, the last shelf before the stern upslant of the great Himalaya Mountains. Gaur traveled the last eighty miles in a little frigid trickle of ice water, the Ganges—up here known as the Bhagirathi.

At last he came to the blue black openings, and slowly went inside. Here were the sacred ice caves which no Indian will enter, but which white men have partially explored. The glaciers and snow beds at Gangroti, however, have no spine chilling mystery in them which compares with the queer, un-understandable procession of young gavials which comes interminably, wanders slowly to the unexplored backs of the caves, and then comes wandering down and back to the Ganges, after doing—what?

Unless sometime man uses dynamite and much determination, he never will get to the backs of these low ice caves. But the gavials have some queer sort of shrine there. No doubt of that. Jules Roudall, who first discovered the caves for white men, bellied into one of the low caves in 1838, going in much like a saurian.

He never emerged to tell the story.

With a steady procession of his reptilian kin, however, Gaur came waddling and slithering forth—looking not one bit holier, as is often the case with human pilgrims leaving a shrine.

Gaur splashed into the trickling Ganges, and started downstream again. He was nearly half grown now, able to feed himself well, though not able to tackle a full grown man with any great hope of success.

That would come. Gaur drifted now when he wished to travel, becoming daily lazier in his actions. He stopped long periods on the mud banks, or in the reedy swamps of the shore. He waxed heavy on the corpses of humans consigned to the sacred river after death. In a land where wood for coffins is lacking, and the price of the burning *ghats* far too great for the lower classes, Mother Ganges and her saurian scavengers offer grim relief.

Gaur's hide was now one full inch thick, beautifully grained, but gnarled and knotted on the outside. He was yellowish green on the back, whitish to blue-white-slate with yellow brown throat wrinkles on the ventral side. He was eleven feet long, with perhaps eleven or twelve more feet to grow in slower inches over the next twenty years.



TWO sad experiences came swiftly now to Gaur. He happened to re-pass the Deo Prayag—the meeting and bathing place of pilgrims where the Alaknanda emptied into the Ganges—during the night. No humans were there. But in the thicketed swamp which lines the low north bank a mile below, danger was waiting.

This happened to be rutting season for the arna, the wild buffalo of the Indian swamps. A big bull male and five cows,

almost as large and every bit as dangerous, were grazing on the coarse grass. Occasionally one of the number went fetlock deep in the mud, and drank from the river. All six creatures got down at intervals, and rolled luxuriously in the mire, getting good coatings of slime which would dry and harden, protecting them from the bites of flies.

Gaur was lying there in the mud when they came this time. They paid him no attention at all. Once when a cow rolled fairly close, Gaur lifted himself a few inches out of the mud, and his jaws began to open. But she got up, shook herself, and walked on to feed.

Gaur looked after her, his unblinking black eyes hungry. Such a choice morsel, if he only could drag her down into the water, then leave her there a few days snagged under a root—

He even might have made up his slow mind to give chase, a hopeless undertaking, but just then two more cows, with the male browsing behind them, came near. Gaur set himself. Then he sprinted, a long, smooth glide like a great log on rollers—

Crunch. His jaws met living meat, the haunch of a cow arna. She recoiled in pain, snuffing, then screaming loudly. And then all the stars in the firmament fell upon the Ganges, as far as Gaur knew.

He had barely started to tug and walk backward, dragging his frantically struggling prey, when with a thudding of small hoofs in the mud, the entire small herd of buffalo was upon him.

One of the long, crescent horns of the snorting, furious male gored his shoulder deeply. Its needle point slid through tough hide, deep into the flesh, grating on bone and going still deeper. One of the females, with horns almost as long and fully as sharp, transfixed Gaur's long, muscled tail. And as he was partially turned over, the other females started prancing all over his anatomy with sharp hoofs, cutting his hide in great strips, bruising, making him very sick, all of a sudden, of the taste of wild buffalo, and anxious only to retreat the few yards to water.

He should have felt that way at first sight of the arna, which are called the

most deadly wild animals in creation, surpassing even the Bengal tiger and the Numidian lion. Now it was a trifle late for retreat. The stern, competent buffalo, who actually chase Indian elephants from their chosen feeding grounds, were out to stamp and gore the gavial to extinction. And they knew their business.

Gaur was the victim of his own rashness and stubbornness. He could not let go of the cow arna. And in spite of all the strength of tail and three legs—his fourth leg was lifted from the mud by the horn of the bull arna—his captive cow actually dragged him up the bank and ten feet further from safety.

Rip. Plunk. Horns went into Gaur again, and were twisted in the wounds as the bull arna shook his head savagely.

That supreme torture probably was the spur which let Gaur get away with a flicker of life. For now Gaur convulsed, threw himself backward over his long tail. His own teeth had been stripped clean from his jaws, letting the cow arna free to swirl instantly and charge.

But Gaur flipped up, standing almost vertical on his tail for an instant, then splashing over backward in the mire and scrabbling hastily for the river and safety.

For a few hours after that he was near death, near the moment when a gavial turns white belly up and goes floating down the stream to be devoured by his fellows. One eye was hurt, and gradually would film over with white, going blind. His whole back was torn to shreds. He had six or seven deep gorings. He just did manage to sink himself there beneath a snagged root. He lay there two days, while the water laved his wounds and some strength returned.

Until or unless he forgot all about that encounter, he might choose other prey than wild buffalo. But as a result of that single encounter he would always be half blind, and limp perceptibly on a stiffened shoulder and right fore leg. It was the way of the savage wild.

Gaur was naturally tough all the way through, however. In a week he was feeding again, sulkily. In two weeks he was making short journeys downstream again, getting back in form. And five

weeks after that he had his second sad experience.

This one was sudden, all over in a split second.

He came to the tongue of land at Allahabad, where the Jumna River and the Ganges join. This is the true Prayag, the most renowned place of pilgrimage, where in a year hundreds of thousands of devout Hindus repair, to wash away their sins in the sacred river. Here the shoals are crowded day and night. And here the Indian Government takes certain precautions which the brown men by themselves never would take. Along the shore are steel watch towers, twenty feet high. In them at all times are sharpshooter guards, equipped with the finest modern repeating rifles.

A naked brown child, bathing with its father and mother, attracted Gaur as he came floating down. The child was two or three yards from the others, standing in waist deep water and splashing gayly.

Gaur let himself rise till his snout was awash, like the ram of a rising submarine. He came stealthily, noiselessly but swiftly towards his toothsome prey. And up there in the watch towers a gong sounded, and men with rifles instantly sprang alert.

Splash. Smash. Smash. Smash...

That was all, but it was plenty. No less than three high power metal-jacketed bullets had crashed into Gaur's snout. None actually pierced his small, compact brain, but the impacts were stunning.

With a convulsive sweep of his tail he submerged, giving up for that day, at least, all thought of eating Hindu children. He sulked below as the current drifted him downstream. His snout was one burning agony, and he never would be able to guess what it was that came flying through the air at him from those towers of death.



WITH his second recovery there was a period of no great adventures. He became lazier, stopping longer periods between trips. But in time—four years from the day he slithered from the cold ice caves at the source of the Ganges—he passed the holy city of Benares. A

little later he reached the confluence of the Ganges with the Son, and stayed right there in that one spot for almost a year. Cholera was raging along the banks of the Son, and Gaur and the other gavials grew fat, caring nothing for the infection, to which they were immune.

But in time the last urge of his instinct sent Gaur onward downstream. By slow stages he reached the Padma, which is a channel leading through the enormous delta of the Ganges. Just a little way further, until he recoiled from the taste of tidal salt from the Bay of Bengal, and Gaur would reach the end of his great hegira.

Here at last was journey's end—the Sunderbunds, or swampland jungles of the Ganges delta. They get their name because they are practically impenetrable to man, due to the interlacing branches of sundari trees. Here there were no floating corpses for gavial food. But living game of all sorts teems thicker in the Sunderbunds than in any jungle left elsewhere on the face of the earth. Enormous herds of wild hogs roamed and snouted out their food, or ganged on greater game and ate the quivering flesh raw. When one of these succulent porkers came down to the water's edge to drink—ah, there was a tidbit for a wily gavial!

It was a greater pig than these, however, which furnished Gaur with his most amazing adventure.

(There was a catch in it, too, but you and I will have to share that joke. Gaur will never know.)

A ponderous three-ton river pig, a rhinoceros, two weeks earlier had encountered a pith helmeted hunter in a boat. The big, red-eyed river pig had been stung by fiery bullets, not quite fatal. The rhino promptly charged and overturned the boat. The white hunter was smashed to pulp, along with his native boatmen. Then the rhino, with hot lead burning in his vitals, swung away grunting, probably to die.

But not the way he did die.

The rhino was weak and sick, probably no more than half conscious, when Gaur nosed cautiously up to the mountain of flesh half in and half out of the water. The big fellow was surrendering

to fate. If he had not been bothered he probably would never have moved again.

Gaur's appetite began to waken. He nosed all around. This was living flesh, all right, not just a great stone or butt of log. There was a strange scent of death about it already. Surely it could be dragged down and made into toothsome carrion with just a little effort. Gaur thereupon opened his great jaws and closed them about the sick rhino's fore leg. The gavial began to thrash and tug, striving to drag that enormous bulk down under the water.

Gaur failed to move it on this first try, even his enormous strength being insufficient. But back from the fog and shadows which were closing in upon his dim brain, came irritation and red wrath to the rhino. He snorted awake, moved to get to his feet—and saw this horrible thing chewing on his own fore leg.

Then the rhino got up to smash things.

For a space of a few seconds it was as if a locomotive, or a huge concrete mixer suddenly had been endowed with living fury, and had run amok. The rhino charged, tripped, got up, tried to use his horn and found he could not do much with it. He threw himself and the whip-cracked gavial out into the channel, then plowed ashore, splashing and snorting. His glazing eyes flashed red fire.

Gaur held on to the fore leg. He was hurled around this way and that, in a maelstrom of unleashed fury. But he did not let go, even when the rhino fell flat on him crushingly.

And then as his side struck bottom, the rhino gave one last convulsive spasm, shuddered all over, and relaxed. He was dead.

Gaur took full credit, of course. He grinned his triumph. Little by little then he hauled the mountain of flesh into a safe mooring place, where just a little of the back showed above the surface, and the current could not steal it.

This prey, when ripe, surely would provide a full week of gorging meals—yes, even with the unwelcome help of all the other scavengers.

Gaur would feed and grow fat, and never suspect the ease of his tremendous victory—unless or until some time he tackled another rhino, unwounded. . .



THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet.

A NEW book from our *Ask Adventure* men is Robert E. Gardner's "American Arms and Arms Makers", published by the F. J. Heer Printing Co., Columbus, Ohio. It is a complete and detailed list of American arms makers, and a valuable historical reference book. It's already answered a question for a friend of ours who likes to shoot a squirrel gun out in the Jersey hills—it gave the information he wanted on the good old Pennsylvania gun maker who turned out that gun about 1840.

The book will be of much use to gun cranks and gun collectors.

We announce the appointment of a new expert on taxidermy—Edward B. Lang, of 156 Joralemon Street, Belleville, New Jersey.

He is familiar with all of the various taxidermy methods both old and new, having spent the last five years on the staff of the Science Department of the Newark Museum. His work has included the collection, preparation, and exhibition of a great variety of zoological specimens, although most of his time has been spent on mammals and birds.

He is affiliated with several ornitho-

logical organizations and is retiring president of New Jersey's Urner Ornithological Club.

WAS this porpoise really good eating—or was it that after 150 days on Scotch rations a sailor could welcome a change?

Dear Sir:

I have been a reader of *Adventure* since it about first came out and I have not missed many copies since, although I am not a regular subscriber.

I noticed in the October 1938 issue a request on information regarding the porpoise. I remember distinctly one trip which I made which took us 150 days from Iquique, in Chile, to Liverpool with a cargo of nitrate in the barque *Shandon* from Glasgow. Do not forget that on that long a trip on a Scotch ship the grub was not very plentiful. (You get your whack and ye get nae mare.)

Well, we harpooned a porpoise. It was about 7 feet long. We killed it, and to make the meat edible, you have to skin it and also cut off from 2 to 3 inches of blubber right along with the skin.

It was darn good eating to us and I can always remember that the brains and the liver very strongly resembled pork brain and liver.

The meat was dark and I don't think it was tough; it was better eating than albacore or bonito. We had ours fried mostly.

As far as it being an article of diet on the old sailing ships, I would say it was not, as they were not so easy to harpoon. It was just a lucky strike on our part to catch that particular one. It tasted great, but as I said, on a 150 day passage on a Scotch ship most anything would taste good after eating salt horse and salt pork for so long.

—Daniel Highland, Honolulu, T. H.

FROM P. Bogelund, Toronto, Canada:

Sometime ago you published a statement by H. Bedford-Jones that "the American flag is the oldest national ensign in existence." That is not correct, as I hope to show.

The Danish national ensign, the red ground with the white cross, dates back to the 13th century. During one of the crusades undertaken by the Danish king, Valdemar Victor or the Victorious, against the Heathens on the Baltic shores of the country which is now Estlandia, things were not going so good. Supplies were running low, reinforcements were not coming as they should and on top of that there was some kind of internal trouble back in Denmark. During the last and deciding battle the Heathens decidedly had the edge over the fighting Danes, until an event happened which broke the resistance of the Heathens and gave the decision to the defenders of the Faith. They called it a miracle, and today, with sources of information from that time being what they are, it is a bit hard to explain what happened. However, here goes, according to legend:

In spite of gallant fighting and personal bravery, the Danish forces were slowly being overwhelmed and forced back towards the seashore and their ships. The Holy Knights and their followers formed a halfcircle, the center of the army where the king was fighting being out in front, while the wings were drawing back to protect the line of retreat to the ships. In the center of the halfcircle the archbishop and his attending clergymen were praying for the victory of Christianity.

Already some of the Danes were turning their back to the fight, and seeing this and knowing what it would mean if others also turned their back, the archbishop stretched his arms towards Heaven, calling for the help and support which at this point only God could give. A curious thing happened: as long as the arms of the Holy Man were extended, the Danes gained ground; when his arms would fall down, the Estlandians would gain and retake the ground just previously

given up. His clerks and followers all ran to his support, spiritually as well as bodily, helped him in prayer and helped him to keep his arms up—and slowly, but surely, the Heathens were forced back.

At this time a booming voice was heard over the noise of the battlefield: "Look towards the sky and follow the sign which will give you victory." All of them, Danes as well as Estlandians, looked up and saw the ensign, the white cross on the red ground, slowly fluttering to earth, but carried by the slight breeze towards the Estlandian army. Following the sign of the cross, the Danish army surged forward in irresistible battle, captured the ensign and defeated the Heathens, who as a direct result of this defeat, were themselves converted to Christianity.

One may take this as a legend, or have some explanation for it; there probably is one. The fact remains that this was the first time the white cross on the red ground waved over the Danish army and over Danish people, a place it has held for the centuries after this event, a place which it still holds in spite of all efforts to the contrary.

The original banner, or ensign, was later lost in one of the innumerable battles with the border countries to the south; for centuries it was hanging in the cathedral of Lübeck as a trophy of war, until it disappeared from there without a trace, probably in the troubled times in the beginning of the 19th century.

DO ANY of the comrades know about these early submarines? John W. Garrett of St. Petersburg, Florida, asks the question—he was once wrecked while convoying one of them.

Although a reader of *Adventure* for more years than I care to remember, I have never ventured to ask admittance to the select circle of the Camp-Fire.

While not an adventurer in the strict sense of the term, I have been about a bit. Mostly my time has been taken up earning a living.

In order to qualify, I might mention being wrecked on the Horn Reefs, Jutland, while convoying the submarine boat *Nordenfeldt* to Cronstadt. Sergeant Tank Corps, A.E.F., and other incidents.

What I would like to learn it, if any of *Adventure's* readers or experts, know of or have heard of the so called Nordenfeldt Submarine Boats as follows:

Resurgam, 1879 built at Birkenhead, England, lost at sea.

Greek Boat, 1883 built at Palmkrantz Yard, Stockholm, Sweden, sold to Greece, ran the

British Blockade, of the Bay of Salemis, Admiral Seymore, R. N., commanding. Greco-Turkish War, 1885.

Abdul Hamid, and

Abdul Mejid Turkish Navy 1887.

These boats had Nordenfeldt one pounder quick firing guns, mounted fore and aft. This disproves the statement, that the Germans were the first to mount guns on a submarine boat.

The last submarine boat built at Barrow-in-Furness, England 1887, sold to Russia, was lost off the Horn Reefs 1889. She was 128 ft. long, 12 ft. beam and depth and could make 13 knots on the surface, when torpedo boats were only able to make 20 and 25. I have photos and other papers to substantiate these statements.

By the way, my father, George William Garrett, picked up Basil Zaharoff as an interpreter, while he was in Athens and took him to Constantinople, in that capacity. On his return to England, my father placed Zaharoff with the Maxim Nordenfeldt Gun Company, which had been formed by Mr. Nordenfeldt, he being the man who backed Hiram Maxim, when the United States and other countries had turned him down.

Zaharoff continued with the Maxim Nordenfeldt Company, afterwards the Maxim Vickers Company and finally the Vickers Arms Company, from which he developed into the premier munitions salesman and so called Mystery Man of Europe.

Yours respectfully,

John W. Garrett,
St. Petersburg, Florida.

IT'S "Hell on the Hoof," and then some, agrees Colonel Lewis, who has hunted the Asiatic Buffalo, and who comments as follows on the Ewen K. Patterson article which appeared in the January issue:

I read with much interest the story "Hell on the Hoof," by Ewen K. Patterson in the January 1939 issue of *Adventure*. I have hunted the Asiatic buffalo, also called the carabao or seladang, and have killed well over 100 of these formerly domesticated animals which had gone astray and gone wild in the Philippines. These formerly domesticated animals, however, are not nearly as aggressive, until after they are wounded, as are the purely wild stock called seladang which abound in Mindanao and Malaysia, but when wounded or excited by the smell and cries of other wounded animals they are truly formidable opponents, both because of their

desperate courage and their tremendous vitality which enables them to withstand an unbelievable amount of lead before becoming disabled.

I have never hunted the North Australian herd, but I see no reason why stock that has been wild for a score of generations should not revert fully to the savage traits of the Malaysian, purely wild form called seladang, undoubtedly one of the world's most dangerous quarry.

All my buffalo or carabao hunting was done with a 30-40 or 30-06 rifle, which is too light a calibre for game of this size, so that may in part account for the respect which I hold for these great animals. A .375 magnum is as light a calibre as should be used on these big animals and the preference would be for something still heavier, like a 12 bore. The .30 calibre can and does kill the biggest carabao, but it requires specific placing of shots in brain or spine which is very difficult to do at close quarters or in cogon grass and forest jungle, or else the following up of wounded animals when they are most dangerous, or equally objectionable, the abandonment of wounded animals to die slowly from gangrene or peritonitis.

We were hunting chiefly for meat purposes and deliberately selected the calves or yearlings whenever possible, as they are far more palatable to Americans than the full grown cow or bull. I have rarely shot the big bulls unless no other meat was available, but even the yearlings and 2-year-olds show amazing resistance to a .30 calibre rifle, often requiring 3 and 4 body shots to disable.

I knew one old bull who received three 30-40 shots broadside through his ribs, all of which went clear through his body and any one of which would have been fatal in a short time. This beast spun his $\frac{3}{4}$ ton bulk in the direction of the shot with the agility of a deer, and charged us through matted cogon grass and mud so thick that it required a bolo for a man to go through it and so high that only the top of his back showed above the sea of green and brown grass. His rush through that vegetable mattress was as impressive an exhibition of sheer animal power as a tank demonstration in a forest. Three rifles fired at him as rapidly as bolts could be worked by expert hands, and later inspection showed 10 hits in head, neck, shoulders and chest. Neither his spine nor brain were hit, but his lungs, stomach, kidneys and liver were each struck and the entire tip torn off the heart, but this bovine juggernaut took bullet after bullet and kept coming until his left foreleg and left hind leg were shattered almost simultaneously at less than 10 yards from my muzzle.

A single rifleman at close quarters with that mass of concentrated rage would have had no chance at all of stopping his charge except by a hit in the spine or brain. There were no trees available for a refuge and we had to depend on straight shooting at a half seen moving mass, which was fortunately slowed up by the swamp and laced cogon stems.

On the other hand I have several times killed a full grown carabao with a single .30 calibre shot in the brain or spine, when time, light and other conditions permitted deliberate shooting at a small target. The trouble is that in most jungle or cogon shooting the hunter does not see the carabao clearly enough to pick a brain or neck shot and has to fire at a partially outlined mass through the vegetation. Under such conditions the .30 calibre is entirely too light a weapon for the full grown carabao.

Cases have occurred when supposedly domesticated work carabao have become maddened by the unfamiliar odor of white troops and have charged a column of American infantry in the rice paddies and have absorbed the entire fire of a score or more rifles, and have reached the column with disastrous effects.

There is just one flaw in the Patterson buffalo story, and that is the fact that though the text carefully and correctly states that the Australian buffalo is the Indian or Asiatic animal, your illustrator very accurately and forcefully presents a Cape buffalo, on page 112. In horns, general build, silhouette and habits the two animals are as far apart as their habitats, a matter of 5,000 or 6,000 miles. The Australian buffalo has a long neck with wide upturned horns rising in the single curve like a flattened out letter U. I have never seen or heard of an Indian buffalo with a secondary curve near the top of the horn and there is no flattening out of the horn into a shield of helmet-like mass over the forehead. On the other hand, the Cape buffalo shown in your illustration has short horns about $\frac{1}{2}$ the spread of the carabao and each horn curves down, not up, over the side of the head and cheek and then has a short upward curve near the tip, giving a sort of outline of the letter "S" laid sideways.

The base of the horn is enormously flattened into a helmet over the brain case to withstand the shock of a ramming attack and the neck is very short and massive like the stockiest of domestic bulls while the Indian buffalo has a much longer and slenderer neck adapted to fencing and goring with its great corrugated horns, each horn often more than 4 feet long measured along the curve. While the Indian buffalo will lock

horns and shove in combat between two bulls, he is most dependent upon goring with the point of his horns or striking with their sharp edges. The Cape buffalo depends chiefly on shock tactics, using his head and body as a projectile to overthrow a worthy foe. Both species use their feet with terrific effect against a smaller and lighter foe such as a leopard, tiger, or man.

SOME comrades looking for certain poems are making an appeal to the Camp-Fire. We think it likely they've come to the right place, and we'll forward any answers.

George Wrigley of Greenville, South Carolina, is looking for the "Snow Worm" poem.

It describes the initiation tendered new arrivals in the Alaskan Gold Fields. As a part of the ceremony they make the initiate drink a cocktail in the bottom of which, as a chaser, is a horrible looking white worm with red eyes, called a snow worm, but actually, as later develops, is a piece of macaroni.

Along comes John J. Foley, of Waterbury, Conn., with this:

In a book that I read recently I was very much interested in a version of a famous Irish ballad. The name of said ballad is "A Little Bit of Heaven" and the parody goes thus:

Oh! A little bit of shrapnel
Fell from out the sky one day,
And it fell upon a soldier
In a field not far away.
And when they went to find him
He was bust' beyond repair,
So they pulled his legs and arms off
And they left him lying there!

Sure—————?

Now, this is as far as the verse in the book goes and I would like to know what the rest of it is. The book that it is from is, "Deep Soundings" by Alan Corby, published by the Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho. The copy that I have was printed in 1937.

And we have a request of our own—does any reader know the words of "The Hermit of Sharktooth Shoals"? This one we heard recited in a smoking car and we'd like to get hold of it and print it if it seems as good as we recall it.

H. B.

ASK ADVENTURE

*Information you
can't get elsewhere.*

OIL on troubled waters.

Request:—On a recent trip we had cause to use storm oil, with which we circled the ship until the supply gave out. We then connected the pumps to the fuel tanks and used fuel oil. I asked the officer what the difference between the two oils was and he said that storm oil is a vegetable oil while the other is a fuel oil.

I would like to know why storm oil is a vegetable oil. I couldn't see any difference in their action on the water.

—Guyton Schlotzhauer, Los Angeles, Calif.

Reply by Mr. Gordon Mac Allister:—You ask why storm oil is a vegetable oil. To that, all I can say is that since vegetable oil is heavier than mineral oil, its use in storms is more efficacious. Almost any kind of oil will give good results, but some kinds are better than others. Animal and vegetable oils are best i.e. sperm, porpoise, linseed, olive and cotton seed; and fairly thick and heavy oils are better than lighter ones. Oil of turpentine is probably best of all. Mineral oils are much less effective, but a very thick, sticky oil or one that tends to thicken or congeal in cold weather, may be improved by thinning with petroleum.

As you perhaps know, there are three kinds of oils i.e. animal, vegetable and mineral. The two former are fixed oils because they will not volatilise without decomposition as do the mineral.



PRACTICAL wild-crafting.

Request:—Can you give me any information on the gathering and preparing for market of the following crude drugs:

Burdock Root

Milkweed Root

Lily of the Valley Root

Ginseng

—D. J. McNamara, Utica, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. Paul M. Fink:—Burdock, milkweed and ginseng roots are best gathered in the Fall, and prepared for market by drying in the shade, in the open air. The burdock root should be split. It is the bark of the milkweed root that is used medicinally. In all cases see that the roots are well dried out before being packed, to avoid any danger of mold or mildew.

Are you sure about lily-of-the-valley roots? None of the herbals or price lists at my disposal list this particular item.

MEXICO'S eagle grasps a snake.

Request:—I would very much like to secure information about a Mexican coin, which has the value of \$16.50 in American money. On one side of this coin is the figure of an Eagle standing on a cactus or an evergreen and holding in one claw the form of a snake. On the other side there is scroll work around the outside of the coin and in the middle another circle arrangement with more scroll work.

What I want to know is the reason for the eagle, the cactus and the snake. Why they were first used on the coin and what do they signify?

Mrs. Richard A. Day, Wilmington, Del.

Reply by Mr. William L. Clark:—In the beginning of the XIVth century, the Aztec people wandered into a rich valley from northern Mexico, and spread throughout that part of the country. About 1335 one of the tribes, having halted on the shore of the principal lake, beheld, perched on a cactus plant, growing from a rock in the waters, a royal eagle of extraordinary size and beauty, with a serpent grasped in its talons, and its broad wings spread to the sun. This occurrence was considered a marvelous omen by the priests, and the place was chosen as a site for a great city. Mexico City was erected on this particular spot.

This picture was kept alive by being cut into stone; in the designs on their buildings, and reproduced frequently in their works of art. It was considered the natural choice of the Mexican people for their coat of arms shortly after the formation of the first republic, and it was formally adopted in 1821. This design first appeared on coins during the early revolution of 1811 to 1814 and has been used with a great deal of regularity from 1823 down to the present time as the principal design on their coins.

I do not know what you mean by the scroll work, unless it is the Aztec calendar which appeared on the twenty pesos piece from 1916 to 1921.

THE *Golden Gate* and its golden cargo.

Request:—Several years ago I read in the Olean newspaper an article about the *Golden Gate*.

According to this article the ship was an old stern-wheeler of the Pacific Mail lines. On her last trip she was carrying three million dollars in gold bullion. This bullion was consigned to the U. S. Mint in Philadelphia. Off the west coast of Mexico, near Mazatlan,

the *Golden Gate* caught fire. Unable to check the fire, the crew made for the beach, where the ship sank off shore in about one hundred and twenty feet of water.

As I recall the piece, a Mr. Johnson recovered sixty thousand in gold from the wreck on a contract with an insurance company, and then abandoned the job. Mr. Johnson stated that he had a concession from the Mexican government to recover this bullion. He also stated that he was willing to give this concession to any adventure-seeking American who wished to try to recover the bullion. The paper said that this Mr. Johnson was a member of a salvaging firm and that his home was in New Jersey and that he also lived in Florida part of the time.

Can you confirm any of the above statements?

At the present price of gold this three million should be of greater value. Do you think it possible to recover any of this gold?

Why did Mr. Johnson abandon it after he had recovered only sixty thousand?

—Kenneth L. Hallock, Olean, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. Edgar Young:—So far as I am aware, the information you read in your local newspaper is correct and corresponds with what I know personally, with the exception of a difference in the amount recovered.

About 1912 I was passing the scene of the wreck on a coaster. An American naval officer was a fellow passenger and as we were passing within easy sight of the operations he told me what he knew about it. He said he had been down there with a crew, along the coast, making some sort of observations for the government. (He had already been telling me what he had learned about surf-boats and landing on the shores at many places, and what a dangerous operation it was.) He said he had landed at the place where the operation was going on and where he could see derricks and gear, on the shore and in the water, and he told me a couple of men, whose names he mentioned, brothers, had got a new idea and were working it at that time. Their idea, it seems, was to tunnel in from the land side, running a sheath a la subway construction, and cutting into the side of the old *Golden Gate*. They had already done this, from what he said, and had recovered one million dollars when the sand came in and stopped them. He said the last time he was there things were at a stalemate and they didn't think they could get any more bullion out and would have to abandon the project. This officer was a reliable fellow and said he had personally seen a quantity of the bullion being loaded. I do not believe he was very much mistaken in the amount they

had got. If they were dealing on a percentage basis with the insurance people it could have been to their advantage to report less instead of more, but they possibly did report the full amount, for from what the officer said they were pretty square fellows and had several other good American men with them.

He also pointed out to me another ship, a big German liner, sitting high on the beach above San Blas on Lower California coast and said the only man on it was a watchman who rang the ship's bell and carried on just as if he were at sea. If I remember rightly the *Golden Gate* was somewhere on the end of Baja California, but it could have been south of Mazatlan. I have been up and down that coast so many times I have forgotten the exact location of the wreck.

I do not know where Mr. Johnson is, but you might locate him through Lloyds in London or through some salvaging company in San Francisco. I think they had the right idea in tunneling after it and with good equipment, running under the hull and cutting up, the entire residue might be recovered. It was my understanding that the sand came in through the hull after they had cut through the side.

THE Fijian "coke."

Request:—In reading a book on the New Hebrides, I came across *Kava*, used by the natives as an intoxicant. It is obtained from the plant species *Piper methysticum* (not to be confused with *Piper betle*, grown on the islands farther north). I would like to get all the particulars I can on this stuff; for example, its habitat, manner of growth and method of cultivation. Would it be possible to get the plant into the United States and would the darn stuff grow if taken care of as well as possible? I suppose the Department of Agriculture could well inform me on the latter. The drug *Kavakava* is used in medicine and for all I know I may be able to get some at the corner drug store. However I am more interested in the plant. I am a graduate forester.

—Ridgway V. Sharpless, Springdale, Pa.

Reply by Mr. William McCreadie:—I am glad you wrote about *kava* or *Yaqona* (pronounced Yangona by the Fijians who are the largest users of the beverage.) It is used in Fiji on all formal and official occasions and the princes—the present King, the Duke of Windsor and Prince Henry were all offered and drank *yaqona* at the official receptions. It is generally used by whites in the islands as the greatest of all thirst quenchers

and is a valuable diuretic. My doctor when living in Fiji told me to have one or more *Bilos*, or half coconut cups, daily. All government departments have it on tap during the morning. It is made from a shrub or bush with heavy thick branches, straggly in habit, growing some six to seven feet high. It takes five years for the roots to mature sufficiently to be of commercial use. The roots are cut when green into squares and dried in the sun. In this form the stuff is sold to traders by the farmers, chiefly native or now also Punjabi Indians settled in Fiji. To use it, the *yaqona* is ground into a powder. This is squeezed in water in a piece of thin cloth like cheesecloth and after a time the fluid is sufficiently strong for use. It cannot be called an intoxicant as it takes about a bucket of it to affect one and then it only affects the lower limbs. A heavy drinker may stagger a bit walking but his brain and senses are quite clear and unaffected. I doubt if it would be possible to grow it on your side, but if you write to the Director of Agriculture, Suva, Fiji, he will perhaps be able to help you on this.

PROSPECTING prospects in Alaska.

Request:—Here I come for information about Alaska.

(1) What is the best time to leave Seattle to reach Alaska in good season to outfit, etc.

(2) Roughly how much cash would it take to outfit two chaps say for three months.

(3) What, in your mind, is the best region to try our luck? What is the best method to reach it—i.e. by boat or plane?

From the above you can judge we want to try for gold or other minerals.

—G. W. Curtis, Ashfield, Mass.

Reply by Mr. Victor Shaw:—The best time to sail from Seattle is Spring, as early as may be necessary to arrive at objective in the north at proper time. This time varies greatly, by a month or so, depending on just where you pick a field.

Choice of a field depends chiefly upon relative cost of a grubstake, although some other items may influence it such as whether you want placer or quartz gold, length of summer working season, etc.

You see, there's no placer along the southeast coast and islands, although all this territory lies inside a proved gold belt, this being due to the peculiar topography, viz: steep coastal mountains, which cause all gold released from vein croppings to be washed into the sea by flood waters, thus making local concentration (placers) impossible. Alaska

placer fields all lie well inland, especially in the northern interior; except for the few beach placers, now mostly worked out.

But the mild climate of southeast Alaska affords a long summer working season lasting some seven or more months, before fall gales make outdoor work inadvisable. Also the grubstake needed there is lower than elsewhere by a very appreciable amount. Can live a year there, outside towns and when you've learned the ropes, for \$300. But similar prospecting along the coast and for some seventy-five to one hundred miles inland in the region surrounding the Gulf of Alaska from Cordova, through Valdez and Seward, up around both Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet, will cost about \$500. Most of the interior back from last named towns where centrally located, will require \$750; and the more remote fields need not less than \$1000 for a ninety-day summer only. The main interior season is from about May 15 to Sept. 15. Extra cost is chiefly due to high costs of transportation. Planes are used now mostly for such travel, but since the region is vast and landing fields haven't yet been built except at a hundred or so points, much of the promising open ground now left needs pack stock to reach.

WILL CODY'S Colt ends up in Piccadilly.

Request:—I have a gun that I am sure will arouse your interest. To be brief, this gun was taken to France by a member of the A. E. F. who died out there, giving it to one of his pals who in turn was invalided to England; he became good friends with an old couple, and when he left for home he gave it to the old man as a keepsake; his widow passed it on to me, a member of London Post, American Legion.

It rests in a small wooden case, with bullet mold, copper powder horn, cleaning rod, etc. It has five chambers and a wooden handle, on which are cut twenty-two notches. And on the barrel are roughly engraved these words. "To Will Cody from Bill Hickok in memory of Chalders Gang."

I wrote to the Colt people in the States, but their records had been destroyed by fire, so they could not help me. It would be more than interesting if you could throw any light on this gun.

The number on the Colt gun is 80626, and the chamber is engraved with a Stagecoach Hold-Up and the barrel is eight-sided. The trigger guard seems to show brass color through the silver or nickel plating.

—George R. L. Semple-Fisher, London, Eng.

Reply by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—If the Colt you have was really given to Cody by Hickok, it's of great value as an historical relic, uniting as it does, the names of perhaps two of the most prominent men of the Old Frontier. While today many attack the reputations of these men, yet to most of us, they remain a pair of the really great men of the West, ranking with Jim Bridger, the two North brothers, Big Bat Pourier, and men of that ilk.

As to the matter mentioned in the script, I fancy the reference is to the McCanles fight. Bill Hickok is credited with killing one of them in a fight, although the details differ. It was a quarrel between him and them, in early days in Nebraska. Bill stated that they attacked him in the cabin where he was keeping a way station for a stage company, and that he killed six of them, with rifle, revolver, and bowie knife. Other writers claim he killed two of them in a fight, shooting them down without warning. I can't determine which is correct, but suspect the latter account to be more nearly correct, although there is no doubt that Hickok was a wonderful revolver shot. An old friend of mine said he saw him shoot at a mark, and he didn't sight his revolver, just looked at the mark and fired rapidly, hitting a small letter "o" with every ball.

A COMPARISON of fencing tactics.

Request:—I've fenced with foil and sabre for six years, and this last year with the épée, but I've never been able to find a book clearly stating these things I want to learn.

(1). The position of the body, in facing opponent, i.e. the "angle" at which body is turned, in French and Italian styles, with fleuret or spada. I know that one school presents the full target, while the other presents as little as possible, but, which is which? Also, those whom I've fenced, who use the American style, present a full target. Is that common?

(2) Is there a great deal of difference between the "Hungarian" and "Italian" styles of sabre fighting? If there is a fair amount of difference, where might I find books, or even an article, about the Hungarian style? Also, what about the "Polish" sabre work. Is it important? I've seen no references to it, outside of the Olympics.

—Richard Hollister, Schenectady, N. Y.

Reply by Captain Jean V. Grombach: The French School is more fully-body than the Italian School, and the Spanish School is

really not a school at all but a combination or compromise between the Italian and French School. There are, basically, only two schools in foil, French and Italian, and the major differences are, the French School takes advantage of greater mobility through bent arm, lower guard and a slightly more bend in the knees; the Italian School is based on straight arm and a position which is actually behind the guard. Most foil fencers in this country use the French style.

There isn't a great deal of difference between the Hungarian or Italian style of sabre fencing. Perhaps I may be wrong, but according to the information which I have, the Hungarian school is based primarily on the teachings of Georgio Santelli, Sr., whose family have been fencing masters to Italian Royalty for many years. Santelli created and developed the Hungarian School of fencing on the basis of the Italian School with improvements of his own, which have since, aided by Hungarian temperament, reached the perfection which this school has today.

It is interesting to note in passing that no country dominates a sport as completely as the Hungarians do sabre fencing. For the last great number of Olympics, they have made a clean sweep in both team and individual fencing. At the World Fencing Championships last summer, the Hungarian team, using substitutes, not only reached the finals but defeated Italy by a lopsided score. In the individual championships in sabre, out of eight men in the final round for the world, six of them were Hungarian, one Italian, and one a Mexican—and the six Hungarians took the first six places.

As far as I know, there is no Polish school of sabre fencing. It is my understanding that the Polish School is an outgrowth of the influence of the Hungarian School and an occasional Pole, who has been through Schlaeger Fencing in Germany.

TAKING up where a glacier left off.

Request:—Please send me some general information about the Grand Coulee Dam. I am interested in its approximate size and cost.

—J. E. Turkal, Newark, N. J.

Reply by Mr. Frank Winch:—

Coulee Dam is located northwest of Spokane and east of Seattle at Mason City, Wash. During the Pleistocene Age, a ponderous glacial sheet rumbled out of the Arctic and spread over North America. A prong of this vast quilt of ice blocked the Columbia River and forced it up out of the gorge in which it was flowing. During the thousands of years to follow a new canyon was formed at right angles to the old course. This is a great corridor of rock fifty miles long, 1,000 feet deep and more than two miles wide. This abyss is called the Grand Coulee of the Columbia River. At the precise point where the prehistoric glacier blocked the Columbia River, the Grand Coulee Dam will duplicate the feat of the ice barrier. The waters will be backed up in a great artificial lake by the world's largest pumping plant.

The amount of concrete used in the dam would build a solid obelisk the size of a city block and two and seven-tenths as high as the Empire State Building in New York. This amount of concrete would build a highway thirty-two feet wide from New York to San Francisco. In figures this means—11,250,000 cubic yards of concrete weighing 25,000,000 tons. The finished dam will be 4,200 feet long, five hundred feet thick at the base, tapering up 550 feet to a top thickness of thirty feet. There are an average of 6,000 workers employed at the dam. Most of these come locally from the state of Washington (by WPA ruling). The wage scale is from fifty cents to \$1.50 per hour. There are two shack towns nearby where most of the workers live. Another, "Coulee Dam", was built for the engineers' homes and will be later the seat of government. Mason City is used by workers. This is an all electric village.

Coulee Dam will catch 109,000 cubic feet per second. The annual run off is 79,000,000 acre feet. The dam will create a lake running back to the Canadian border.

The idea of Coulee Dam originated with a Mr. William Clapp of Ephrata, Wash. That was in 1918. The first story of the idea appeared in the Wenatchee Daily World.

More than fifty-nine millions have been spent and it is expected that two hundred more millions will be necessary before the dam is completed. The contractors are the Mason, Walsh, Atkinson, Kier Co., a combine of four firms. The dam was designed by John L. Savage.



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Motorcycling—regulations, mechanics, racing—CHARLES M. DODGE, 161 Ferguson Av., Burlington, Vt.
Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1632 So. Hayworth Av., Los Angeles, Calif.
Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.
Old-Time Sailing—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: foreign and American—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. No. 3, Box 69, Salem, Oregon.
Shotguns: foreign and American makes; wing shooting—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure*.
★Skiing and Snowshoeing—W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.
Small Boating: skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.
Stamps—DR. H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Av., Denver, Colo.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: spears, pole arms and armor—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, 980 Northwest Blvd., Columbus, Ohio.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—CHIEF STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—CHARLES B. CRANFORD, County Office Bldg., Recreation Comm., White Plains, N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: American; north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Automobiles and Aircraft Engines: design, operation and maintenance—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Aviation: airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: guides and equipment—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

Forestry: in the United States, national forests of the Rocky Mountain States—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: tropical forests and products—WM. R. BARBOUR, 1091 Springdale Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: reptiles and amphibians—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: ship modeling—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining and Prospecting: anywhere in No. America. Outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic—VICTOR SHAW, 11628 Mayfield Av., West Los Angeles, Calif.

The Merchant Marine. GORDON MACALLISTER, care of *Adventure*.

Motor Vehicles: operation, legislative restrictions and traffic—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: birds; their habits and distribution—DAVIS QUINN, 3508 Kings College Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

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29x4.75-19		2.45 1.25	33x4	2.95 1.25	33x5	3.75 1.75		
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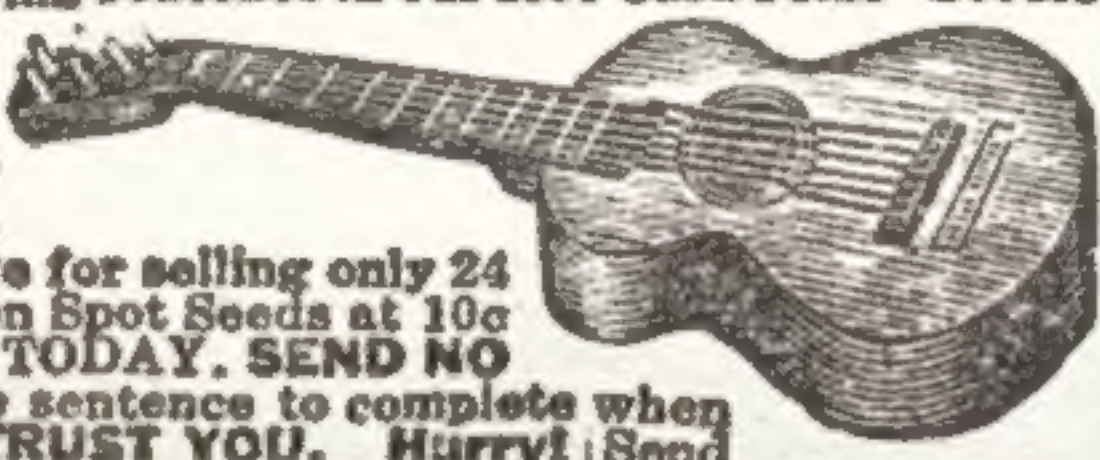
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